The New REPUBLIC

A Journal of Opinion

VOL. LXIX NEW YORK, WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, 1931 NUMBER 889

Contents

The Week 118

Editorials

What Congress Might Do 120
Housing versus Ownership 122

General Articles

Deadlock in Berlin ..... Michael Farbman 124
Parade of Senators ..... Frank R. Kent 126
The Cotton Kingdom: 1931 ..... Renwick C. Kennedy, Walter Wilson and Henry B. Fuller 129
Washington Notes ..... T. R. B. 134
Fall and Rise: Theatre Notes ..... Stark Young 135

Correspondence 137

Reviews of Books

Immaculate Contraception ... Henry Pratt Fairchild 139
Hamill versus Hoover ..... Robert Morss Lovett 140
Alexandrians ..... Rolfe Humphries 141
Bread and Socialism ..... Herman Simpson 141
Vagabond's Return ..... Donald Minot Young 142
Book Notes 142

The Week

WITHOUT analyzing the President's message to Congress in detail, it is possible to describe its main tendency. As is his habit, he speaks with the utmost satisfaction of our supposedly individualistic economic system, and even with some satisfaction concerning the depression which it has brought about. From this depression we have learned something. But what we have learned, according to Mr. Hoover, is just what he believed before it occurred. The specific measures which he recommends to deal with depression (our comments on which are implied in the editorial in this issue, "What Congress Might Do") are carefully guarded against inaugurating permanent changes. The recommended tax increases and the governmental credit agency are automatically to pass out of existence in two years. The basic assumption behind his policy is that our economic arrangements are really all right; the only trouble is temporary lack of confidence. The aim is to restore confidence—to use political agencies to rescue business from the mire into which it has fallen, and having put business on firm ground, to leave it alone so that it may repeat the performance all over again.

AND so the government hasn't fallen after all. The old ladies in New Haven and Columbus who trembled every time a truck went rumbling past their windows, fearing that it carried the diabolical hunger marchers bent on overthrowing our Constitution, may settle back to their knitting reassured. The hunger marchers—to the number of 1,619 by the accepted count—arrived in Washington; they paraded between the Capitol and the White House by the longest route that the efficient police could lay out; they were received by the President's third or fourth assistant secretary—and Congress is still in session, and the Potomac still flows to the sea. What shall we say of the whole affair? The national hunger march bears little resemblance to such upheavals of the past as Shay's Rebellion, or the Whiskey Rebellion, or the draft riots of the Civil War. It suggests the coming of Coxey's Army on May 1, 1894, and the demand upon Congress to issue "$500,000,000 in irredeemable paper" in order to provide for public works. The hunger march was much better organized—indeed, it seems to us that many capitalistic organizations could profit by studying the methods of the Workers' International Relief—but it was less of a mass movement. To arouse the mass of the unemployed is a task that seems beyond the power of the Communists, or in fact of any party or movement whatsoever. Social workers report that the psychology of the unemployed is most often that of the defeated and demoralized, without courage to speak in their own defense. The Communists have the right to speak for them as long as nobody else does so.

WE ARE glad to have from Dr. Charles A. Beard, who knows Japan and its government intimately, confirmation of our belief that the Japanese military cannot be controlled by the civilian government, and that its ambitions are overweening. (Dr. Beard's letter may be found on page 137 of this issue.) This means that all negotiations with the civilian government, whether by the League of Nations or the United States, and whether under the Covenant or the Kellogg-Briand Pact or the Nine-Power Pacific Treaty, are so many waste motions except for purposes of the record.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Japanese military mind is just like the military mind anywhere, and as long as the army is supreme it will go on advancing until it is stopped by some superior force or has gained its objective. The civilian government can merely create diversions and make excuses for what the army does. In spite of all promises, the Japanese may have occupied Chinchow by the time this issue reaches our readers. If so, the incident will be merely a repetition of all the others which have occurred since the crisis began. It goes without saying that no Occidental nation will stop Japan by force of arms. That being the case, we might as well register our disapproval, cease attempts to negotiate a settlement and sit tight until the military policy brings its inevitable economic reaction to the Japanese people. For there are two things the army cannot do—raise the money to support its campaigns and produce the prosperity which makes larger expenditures possible.

THE tears which Mayor Walker shed in behalf of Tom Mooney have by this time mingled with the Pacific, the tumult and publicity have sagged off to a dead calm, while any hope that Mooney will be freed in the immediate future seems to have receded beyond range of the naked eye. Governor Rolph, who in the first exalted moments of the crusade, when bands were playing and flashlights popping on every side, promised an early decision and seemed ready to grant a pardon, now gives every evidence of falling back upon the stalling tactics of his predecessors. He announces that at some indefinite time within the next three months he will review the case with his advisers, will hear the arguments of those opposing a pardon and will decide the appeal for pardon on its own merits. In other words, Mayor Walker's California crusade, creditable as it was to his goodness of heart, seems only to have intensified the fanaticism of Mooney's opponents and to have made the Governor even less inclined to jeopardize his political career by freeing Mooney than he was a month ago. Meanwhile the case itself has settled even deeper into that bog of class prejudice and intolerance where it has remained for the past fifteen years.

WHAT amounts to a post-mortem over our recently deceased prosperity is being held by Senator La Follette's subcommittee on manufactures, which is preparing to introduce into Congress a measure for a national economic council. One by one the leaders of frenzied finance have been giving their fascinating testimony before this committee. The latest of them, Charles E. Mitchell, head of the National City Bank, has announced himself as opposed to control by an economic council, and pessimistic on all such plans. But this erstwhile optimist now willingly confesses that during the epoch-making days of 1928 and 1929 the bankers were "too liberal" in their credit policy. When they saw how for foreign loans, for securities of all types, they outdid each other in filling this demand. Even Mr. Mitchell now admits sadly that some early curbing of the inflationary tendency might have helped in good measure. "There were warnings aplenty," he says. But who, if not Mr. Mitchell, made himself known as an outstanding "bull" by his extravagant predictions? Who, if not Mr. Mitchell himself, rushed with many millions in cash to the rescue of the call-money market, during the temporary squeeze of April, 1929, so that the mad dance might be madder still? Mr. Mitchell's testimony, to say the least, is suspect. Everything he says in his own defense convinces one of the need for some check upon the excessive operations of the Mitchells, such as might be provided by economic planning.

THE writers' committee which visited the coal fields of eastern Kentucky came back with the report that the Red Cross, in Harlan and Bell counties, was allowing itself to be used as a strike-breaking agency. It began to function in the Kentucky mining towns last winter, at a time when wages were being cut so sharply that miners no longer earned enough to keep their families from starving. That, it seems, was an act of God. When unions began to be reorganized last spring, all hint of the Divine Mercy faded from the picture, and Red Cross relief work was sharply restricted. The writers' committee reports that when a starving miner applied for relief, he would be interviewed as follow: "Are you working?"—"No."—"Here, take this card around to such-and-such a mine and the superintendent will give you a job. If you don't earn enough to support your family, we'll see about helping you later."—"But the mine's on strike. I don't want to be a scab."—"So you won't work, you lazy, hulking tramp! Get out of this office and don't come back." There are evidently two ways in which the Red Cross has served as the tool of the operators: first, by offering them an excuse not to pay their employees a living wage, second, by driving the men back to work when they go on strike. The local Red Cross workers, usually drawn from the class financially interested in the mines, are of course directly responsible for this state of affairs, but their actions have never been condemned by the national organization. It seems to us that people who contribute to the Red Cross have a right to ask whether their money is going to be used for disinterested charity, or simply as a means of keeping wages down.

THE financial condition of our city governments provides immediate problems which must be faced whether in planning national unemployment relief or in revising government economy. In most timely fashion a new statistical survey of the financial status of 135 cities in the United States and Canada has just been completed by Frederick L. Bird of the Municipal Administration Service. Although the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

only the period up to the end of 1930—before things began to look much blacker—the statistics picture a dangerous situation, one which made the bankers dealing in municipal bonds quite panicky during the summer of 1931. In the great majority of cases, city expenditures have been rising steadily, tax assessments have also been rising, and direct expenditures for unemployment relief have more than doubled for 1930 as against 1929, although the greater share of poor relief is still carried by the counties. Meanwhile, there has been a sudden increase in delinquent and unpaid taxes. Bond issues to cover the deficit have not always been possible: the unused margin of authorized bonded indebtedness fell about 10 percent during 1930—roughly, $81,000,000. "Some cities have so nearly reached the limit of their borrowing power," Mr. Bird states, "as to preclude any further financing by this means." The great majority must curtail their borrowings and cut expenses. But how are they to do so and still continue their relief expenditures and public-works programs? If municipal relief work continues, taxes cannot be reduced; if taxes stay up, rents cannot be radically lowered, and thus the thoroughgoing deflation which, according to many economists, might end the business depression is indefinitely postponed.

THE three articles in this issue of The New Republic under the heading "The Cotton Kingdom: 1931" are all by Southerners. They were all spontaneously submitted, and none of the authors knew of the existence of the other articles. None, of course, assumes responsibility for the opinions expressed by the others. Nevertheless, they seemed to us to tell such a significant story when combined that we have printed them together. Persons in the cities where unemployment is prevalent are likely to forget how deeply the depression has bitten into agriculture, and how badly disorganized rural economy has been in prosperity and depression alike. No mere automatic "revival" can rescue a state of society which is at all like that pictured in the Southern articles.

THE movement among the workers of the Brooklyn Edison Company to organize a union has been bitterly though silently fought by officials of the company. A culminating incident was the clash in which a group of organizers distributing leaflets on behalf of the newly formed Brotherhood of Brooklyn Edison Employees was attacked and beaten by a mob of thugs. They had obtained permission to distribute literature in the streets, in spite of the objections of company officials on previous occasions; this time, the union organizers contend, the Brooklyn Edison Company sought to intimidate them by turning loose several hundred hired gangsters. The union is still an "underground" organization, owing to the threat of dismissal hanging over the heads of members. Numerous church workers in Brooklyn have taken the side of the employees, among them the Reverend Bradford Young of the Protestant Episcopal Church of the Holy Trinity. Recently Matthew S. Sloan, president of the Brooklyn Edison Company, withdrew as a member of this church and canceled his subscription to its endowment fund. He then issued a statement in which he answered the charge of having encouraged the slugging and intimidating of union organizers: he answered it merely by attributing the attacks to "unauthorized" employees of his company. If their zeal in his behalf took the form of using blackjacks on theological students, why, that was their own business. These are anything but Christian sentiments. Though it sounds naïve of us, we can't help thinking that Mr. Sloan, in resigning from his church before issuing this statement, did exactly the right thing.

What Congress Might Do

LAST SPRING the administration was eager for the adjournment of Congress, so that business, without political interference, should have a chance to restore prosperity. Our legislators, if permitted to remain in Washington, might do something rash, like voting higher taxes, or appropriating federal funds for unemployment relief. But in the calm of their absence, all-wise and all-powerful business could proceed to work out of depression. We now see how successful business has been in this endeavor. And Congress comes back in its regular course to perform at least a minimum of necessary political acts. It must do now what last winter the Progressives said it would have to do—raise taxes. It must politically ratify the chief anti-depression measure executed in its absence—the moratorium on allied war debts. It will be asked by the President to sponsor others—such as the formation of a "Reconstruction Finance Corporation." The gospel of salvation by business faith has at least yielded some ground to the gospel of salvation by political works.

Of course Congress itself is no unfailing light in our darkness. A large section of it represents the prevailing business philosophy of do-nothingism even more faithfully than does the administration itself. Another large section is more concerned with winning patronage in the next election by defeating the President and his party than with helping to defeat bad times. But Congress could, if it would, exercise the power of government for the benefit of the commonwealth. It could do many things which business has neither the power nor the inclination to do. Unless we learn how to employ political instruments for the immense economic benefits which are possible only through their proper use, we shall never conquer our unruly civilization. Some members of the House and the Senate understand this fact, and will act forcefully and intelligently in the light of it. To them the support of good industrial citizens should be accorded.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Among the more important duties which ought to engage the attention of the Seventy-second Congress are the following:

Immediate relief of the worst sufferers from depression. There is reliable testimony to the effect that the charity drives, plus appropriations of local governments to relieve unemployment, are insufficient in many localities. Even in New York, where income is about three times as large in relation to the volume of unemployment as in the country generally, Mr. Harvey D. Gibson of the Gifford organization has just said: "Conservative estimates point to the fact that at least $60,000,000 is needed to afford complete relief for unemployment in New York this winter. At present, from public and private funds, there is hardly more than $38,000,000 in sight." How much worse must be the situation in small industrial and mining centers! Congress should not wait for the President to act in this matter, since he is heavily committed to the adequacy of local relief. It should make a rapid survey of the need and appropriate money to be applied where needed by local organizations, according to the principle of grants in aid, as suggested by Mr. William Hodson in the November Survey Graphic.

Emergency measures to stem the depression. If still further collapse of prices, wages and employment are to be avoided, more purchasing power must somehow be put in circulation. The only alternative to prolonged and disastrous deflation is some measure of controlled inflation. Inflation may not work, but it is worth trying, in the right way. Numerous economists have been urging that the Federal Reserve Banks force more credit into our business arteries and aid the bond market by greatly enlarged purchases of government bonds and bankers' acceptances. But the Reserve Banks have been either unable or unwilling to produce this effect. Though business cannot or will not borrow to enlarge activities, government can if it will. A federal bond issue of at least $3,000,000,000 to finance public works would utilize available credit resources to put money in circulation. There is every reason to believe that sufficient projects are ready to push if money were available. Part of these funds may be loaned by the federal government at a low rate to local and state governments which are temporarily unable to raise the money they need for construction.

Congress should be wary of measures encouraging the type of inflation which cannot be controlled when the time comes to apply a curb. A proposal of this dangerous sort is that to enlarge the kinds of paper eligible to rediscount by the Federal Reserve Banks. Congress should also be wary of proposals of the type which the President seems to favor, such as are calculated merely to sustain the values of securities and help out the banks, without having a general effect on business activity. It is very likely that no sound progress can be made without further deflation of many capital claims to future income, even though something is done to raise commodity prices and stimulate production. We look with misgiving on a governmental finance corporation to sustain the values of securities, or on direct governmental help to distressed railroads. If we embark on a program of controlled inflation, it should be remembered that the sound aim is to increase those prices which have fallen the most, not to sustain the most inflexible elements of our price structure, like interest and rents.

Government finance. The next job of Congress will be to tackle the fiscal problem, which has been brought to such a sad state by the mistaken taxation policies of Coolidge, Mellon and Hoover. If personal and corporate income taxes had not been successively lowered during prosperity, we could either have accumulated a surplus for present use or have paid off the public debt more rapidly, thus reducing current expenses for interest and building up a much larger cushion of federal borrowing power. As it is, we face a deficit of at least $2,000,000,000 in the current fiscal year. We cannot increase taxes enough to eliminate this deficit at once, nor should we attempt to do so. But we ought to restore the higher rates of income and estate taxation which were foolishly abandoned, both on account of their present yield and for the future assurance of relief when and if prosperity returns. We ought to include in this measure a rebate up to, say, 25 percent in such states as wish to improve their own finances by state income taxation, as suggested in a recent New Republic editorial. For one thing, no better measure of farm relief could be devised than to encourage states to raise their revenue by income taxes rather than by property taxes.

Congress should sanction no sales tax or any other type of excise which is passed on to the consumer. These taxes are fundamentally unjust and will retard recovery by obstructing trade. Such deficits as the government cannot meet by the yield of increased income taxes ought to be met, during a depression, by borrowing. Short-term notes should be used for covering normal expenditures, and bonds for public works.

Beginning to plan. Having attended to the first essentials in the emergency, Congress ought to begin to build for the longer future. Senator La Follette has a bill for a National Economic Council. His Senate committee has been holding highly instructive hearings on this subject. An expert committee, appointed by the Progressive Conference last spring, has drawn up a report on national economic planning, soon to be released, which suggests what ought to be done and why. On the basis of these inquiries Congress can take the necessary first steps. We shall not at this time elaborate them, since the subject is reserved for future discussion. But it overshadows in ultimate importance anything else which Congress may do.

Other long-term policies. If we are to go in for economic planning, all economic policies of the gov-

LICENSED TO GALE.NZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

ernment will eventually be largely affected by the planning activities. But while the planning institutions are being built up, a large number of specific things can be done, and some of these are already in shape for action, or will demand action soon.

Congress should take steps looking toward progressive lowering of tariff barriers, if possible by international agreement, but without agreement if international action is delayed.

The Wagner bill setting up a federally coördinated system of employment exchanges should be repassed by a majority large enough to override a second veto. A bill should be passed encouraging a federally coördinated system of unemployment insurance.

The Norris bill for government operation of Muscle Shoals should be passed again. Federal regulation of the interstate activities of public utilities should be established.

Congress should make a searching inquiry into possible improvements of the banking system, and should take sound measures to strengthen it.

If railroad action becomes necessary, it should lie in the direction of building up a publicly owned and operated system or systems rather than in the direction of bolstering weak private properties with public funds.

A broad housing program, of the nature outlined in the following editorial, should be inaugurated.

Congress should resist the pressure of business interests to modify the anti-trust laws until the planning agencies which it sets up report in what way industry can best be organized to serve the public interest.

These, in our opinion, are the most important duties before Congress. There are many other pressing problems, but the program outlined above is certainly enough for the main activities of one session. Even this, of course, is too much to hope for in its entirety, in view of the attitude of the President and the dominant interests of the country. But it is something tangible to try for. If the progressive group in Congress pushes a program of this nature, it will at least have demonstrated that there is real leadership in the country.

Housing versus Ownership

THE PRESIDENT'S Conference on Home Building and Home Ownership got very little attention from the newspapers after the first day. This was hardly to be wondered at. President Hoover's opening speech showed that he had no intention of taking even the shortest step in the matter of promoting good housing—and that is not news.

At the Conference, various committees submitted a bulky array of reports: but two of the most important committees, on finance and on incomes, had no positive programs to offer; and the suggestion that still more studies should be made was merely a cloak for further inaction. With the exception of the remarkable report by the Committee on Large Scale Production, none of the committees dared to challenge the President with a public policy. The Conference as a whole was lost in the welter of the facts it had collected.

Mr. Hoover's passion for fact-finding bodies is offset, we know quite well by now, by his desire to avoid facing the facts after they have been found, if they happen to run contrary to his wishes or private dreams. Now the facts about home building and home ownership and our present housing needs are admirably summarized in Dr. Edith Elmer Wood's survey of "Recent Trends in American Housing" (Macmillan). Had this treatise been distributed to the members of the Conference, as a basis for vigorous thought upon a policy and a program, an expensive and futile meeting could have been spared.

What are the facts? Two-thirds of the population of the country cannot afford to rent or buy new houses of sound planning and good construction. The new houses that they do buy and rent are stupidly and wastefully designed, poorly built, and at their very lowest prices they constitute an insupportable extravagance: in terms of elementary domestic hygiene, they are slums. By economies in financing and construction and planning, the Committee on Large Scale Operations estimates that the cost of good housing may be reduced sufficiently to reach another 10 percent of our population—"a group whose incomes are next below the one-third of the population who receive the highest incomes."

How, then, can the remaining 57 percent of the population demand houses? There is no other means of providing new housing than by doing what every European country has been forced to do: make up the difference by a government subsidy. All the thrift, all the good character, all the sentimental passion for a home, will not change this situation: nothing short of a fundamental economic revolution would give the bottom two-thirds of our income groups a family income over $2,000 a year, even in times of prosperity. To achieve good housing, the alternatives are: a subsidy or a revolution.

With great cheerfulness our old-fashioned American individualists refuse to face this fact: the Committee on the Relationship of Income and the Home closed its report without a positive word on the subject. As for Mr. Hoover, he brought forth his humorous proposal for Home Loan Discount Banks as a means of meeting our housing needs: a proposal half-heartedly seconded by the Committee on Finance. Mr. Hoover's statesmanlike measure to make it possible to get possession of a house with a down payment of 25 percent not only ignores the testimony of one of his committees that *this is the usual sum:* it ignores the fact that in many parts of the country the down payment can almost be made in Confederate money, so anxious is the builder to unload on the market. Twenty-five per-

LICENSED TO UMZ
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

cent would protect the banks better: but it would place a new and unusual burden on the home owner.

But fundamentally Mr. Hoover is not interested in housing, he is interested in ownership. So he fails to see that even the upper third of the income groups have a housing problem that cannot be met by any scheme of providing easy money for an individual owner, building according to his own specifications an individual house. For the house is no longer an individual unit: it is an organism whose internal design and domestic uses are closely associated with the economic use of land, the timely provision of public utilities and the coördinated design of the community as a whole. No one can build a good house today without building at the same time the community in which it is to be set.

One of Mr. Hoover's committees showed that in seventeen large cities that were examined, 80 to 90 percent of the domestic building in all classes was by means of mass-production methods. Any sound method of enabling the individual to own his house must therefore be based on a policy of obtaining high standards of plan and design in these developments: a matter in which banks and insurance companies are stupidly negligent. Mr. Hoover still thinks in terms of the old-fashioned individual and independent house, built more or less to order; and, failing this, he is willing to let the individual purchaser take his chances with the botched and worthless stuff that is offered in the market: he would even lend government money to banks that have been caught with mortgages on such property.

In putting ownership above good housing, Mr. Hoover not merely set the conference a false goal: he put the cart before the horse. Ownership is a matter of degree: the first twenty years of acquiring a house on the instalment plan are a source of anxiety so long as jobs are insecure, and so long as a period of depression—or even a break in a single trade—may cause the "owner" to lose not merely the tenancy of his house but all the money he has sunk into it to date. Ownership means stability and safety only if the owner's income is regular and is sufficient to cover payments despite drains from illnesses and accidents. To suggest the extension of home ownership in an industrial country without the institution of unemployment insurance is a piece of romantic folly. Ownership does not produce security: it is security that produces ownership.

Plainly, the critical task of housing cannot be solved by approaching it from the standpoint of ownership. The real problem of American housing today is not to unload our worthless and disreputable slums upon a new group of "owners": the real problem is to get rid of the dreary expanse of sub-standard housing which, as the Committee on Large Scale Operations well says, "constitutes the largest mass of discredited and obsolete equipment" in the country, and to build new communities, so financed that even the lowest income groups will be able to demand them. Not a step toward this goal can be made by ordinary commercial methods. A small but effective step can be made, as various experiments around New York have shown, by the limited-dividend corporation: but this step is curtailed by a lack of capital willing even in good times to invest in long-term enterprises at a mere 6-percent profit.

The situation is one that calls for a heroic declaration of war; but the members of the President's Conference were not, alas, the stuff of which heroes are made. First of all: we must call a halt upon the use of public funds for utilities and transportation systems which help to subsidize the building of new slums. Second: we must wage a campaign to tear down the great bulk of ancient and modern housing throughout the country—it is not confined to the big industrial cities—and to lay out a thousand new communities on modern lines. The objective cannot be achieved by building four sound walls and a roof; it is a matter of obtaining at the same time fresh air, sunlight, open spaces, playgrounds, gardens, safe and quiet streets: that is, communities built not merely for working efficiency, but for the care of the young and the pleasurable use of leisure.

Such a program, carried through in the very way that War Housing was carried on in America, and that post-war housing was accomplished in Frankfort-am-Main, would do more than build a civilized environment for the coming generation. It would bring life back into our weakened industries and purchasing power back into our communities: far more life and power than any picayune attempts at building roads—with their small demands upon labor and manufactured materials, and their frequent ultimate uselessness. The Committee on Large Scale Operations conservatively estimates that the expenditure of over five billion dollars would be required to reach with new housing only 10 percent of our population—excluding that on farms. And this would be only a first step. One is driven to reëcho Dr. Edith Elmer Wood's demand —Wanted: a Major Statesman to make Housing on a Grand Scale the chief plank in his platform. (He is not in the White House.)

THE NEW REPUBLIC

PUBLISHED WEEKLY AND COPYRIGHT, 1931, IN THE U. S., BY THE NEW REPUBLIC, INC., 421 WEST 21ST STREET, NEW YORK CITY. BRUCE BLIVEN, PRESIDENT. DANIEL MEBANE, TREASURER.

EDITORS

BRUCE BLIVEN MALCOLM COWLEY R. M. LOVETT
GEORGE SOULE STARK YOUNG

CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

JOHN DEWEY WALDO FRANK ALVIN JOHNSON
E. C. LINDEMAN LEWIS MUMFORD GILBERT SELDES
R. G. TUGWELL LEO WOLMAN

RATES: SINGLE COPIES, FIFTEEN CENTS; YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION, FIVE DOLLARS; CANADIAN, FIVE DOLLARS AND FIFTY CENTS; FOREIGN, SIX DOLLARS; THREE MONTHS' TRIAL, ONE DOLLAR.

DIGITIZED BY NZ ORE
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Deadlock in Berlin

THE PARLIAMENTARY system in Germany is still under the tutelage of the bureaucracy; it has yet to establish itself as the leading power in the country. Thinking persons here openly express their doubts of the existence in the Reichstag of anything like mature political thought. However, this is not the only obstacle to a correct estimate of the trend of politics in Germany. A foreign student must accustom himself to that peculiar German mentality which demands that even the simplest ideas and formulas shall be expressed in a complex and involved phraseology. This mental confusion is so much a mixture of spontaneity and sophistication that the real trend of thought is apt to evade the observer.

Whether this nebulousness of German politics is the cause or the result of the dearth of statesmen of the first rank in Germany it would be hard to say. A few months ago Dr. Bruening was being hailed as not only the biggest statesman since the outbreak of the War, but since the death of Bismarck. At present, although his abilities are less highly rated, he still remains the Triton among the German minnows. One must, however, realize that it was his personality rather than his achievement that gave him his initial success. And the Bruening legend which once exercised so great a fascination obviously owed its origin to the Chancellor's unwonted freedom from bureaucratic stiffness, to a streak of high purpose and idealism and to a belief in his advancing toward something like a definite political objective.

His greatest eulogists admit that in foreign affairs he has fallen short in many ways. In this, the most delicate and important domain, Dr. Bruening, unlike Streseman, has failed to follow a definite and consistent line of policy. He has been inclined to make experiments and has endeavored to score a success in this sphere merely from a desire to gratify nationalist sentiments, with the result that more than once he has been compelled to retreat with some loss of dignity and prestige.

Bruening's internal policy, on the other hand, has been far more successful. Clearly his purpose is to create in Germany a strong Conservative party by uniting the Right with the Center in the formation of what might be called in England a Tory democracy. So far he has not proved very successful in this attempt; for the parties of the Right, being violently anti-republican and anti-democratic, are deaf to his appeal. Moreover, anything which smacks of steadiness and moderation is even more abhorrent to the parties of the Right than to those of the Left. The Nationalists are too much out for blood, for revenge, for patriotic and class self-assertion, to be in a mood to follow a leader who is striving to bridge over social and economic barriers and is aiming at the consolidation of the Republic. All the efforts which Dr. Bruening has made to conciliate them at the expense of the taxpayers have failed. All the bribes which he has lavished on the East Prussian landowners, the industrialists, the bankers and the house owners, in the form of credits, tariffs, direct assistance (often called "control") and relief from taxation, have been accepted of course, but accepted without thanks. In making these concessions, indeed, Dr. Bruening miscalculated rather badly; as recent history shows, the very classes which once groveled at the Chancellor's feet for government largesse demonstrated their gratitude by uniting at Horzburg with the Nazis for the purpose of bringing their benefactor down. Even his staunchest admirers have deplored this policy of the open hand and regretted the fact that in his impatience Dr. Bruening permitted the tactician to get the upper hand over the statesman.

Certainly the Chancellor is no mean tactician. He has proved most adroit in playing one party off against another; and though the head of a minority government (a combination of the Center with the other middle parties gives him only 143 votes out of 577), he has contrived not only to dominate the Reichstag but actually to supersede it. Germany is ruled now by a duumvirate composed of the President of the Republic and the Chancellor, with a Reichstag submissive and subservient to the point of abdication.

The attitude of the Reichstag, especially of its largest party, the Social-Democrats, is the most puzzling feature in a political situation replete with puzzles and paradoxes. The only explanation of their toleration of the present dictatorship is their consciousness that any attempt to assert themselves could only lead to a dissolution of the Reichstag and to the transformation of the present veiled dictatorship into an open one. This seems to be the crux of the present German political situation, which continues not because the Reichstag tolerates the government, but because the government tolerates the Reichstag.

It is safe to say that an adverse vote against the government in the Reichstag would result in the dismissal not of the former but of the latter. And it was this subconscious feeling which rendered all that excitement which prevailed in Germany at the time of the October Reichstag session more than usually factitious. Trained observers were aware that the danger was not that the government might succumb to the vote of censure, but that the passing of such a vote might be followed by the public promulgation of an unrestricted dictatorship.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

It would be absurd to suppose that the Social Democrats are blind or indifferent to the dangers of tolerating a government which has repudiated the Reichstag and rules by decrees. They are quite aware of the harm which they are suffering as a party from their toleration of this situation. Every day they can count this harm in the decrease of their adherents and still more in the reduction of their voting strength at elections. At every consecutive poll since the last elections to the Reichstag, the Social Democrats have met with defeats as sensational as the National Socialists' gains. Take the recent elections in the federal states. At Hamburg the Social Democrats lost 26,000 votes, or 11 percent of their strength, while the Nazis gained 57,000 votes and increased 40 percent. In Mecklenburg the Social Democrats lost 12,000 votes, while the Nazis gained 33,000 votes; in Hesse the Social Democrats lost 47,000 votes, while the National Socialists gained 150,000.

No doubt, if the Social Democrats would only break away from the policy of tolerating the government and adopt an independent pro-labor policy, they would at once change their electoral luck. But that would mean only one thing—heading for a revolution; for, as I have already indicated, they would have to face a resolute and powerful dictatorship. Moreover, by taking such action they would stand to lose the very effective support which the Center is giving to the defense of existing trade-union laws against the attacks of the industrialists.

Like manufacturers in other countries, the German industrialists bitterly lament that their power of competition is paralyzed by the inordinately high wages industry has to pay to the workers. In Britain the demand for a drastic lowering of wages is justified by need of competition with Germany, where the standard of living is far below that of the British workers; while in Germany the same plea is put forward with the same sort of justification: the necessity of bringing down the too high standard of living to the level of other manufacturing countries. The attack on wages and union rules has been going on for some time in Germany. But the recent withdrawal of Great Britain from the gold standard, which is supposed to give British exports a bonus, has at once been seized as an opportunity for demanding a drastic cut in wages and for rescinding the tariff agreements.[1]

These demands were incorporated in a manifesto by the industrialists, who made this the price for their support of the government. This resolute and uncompromising attack, permeated with class consciousness, made a very bad impression on Germans in general and on the government in particular, and roused great indignation among the workers. To understand how strong this indignation was, it is sufficient to say that it had the unprecedented effect of bringing about a joint action among the three branches of the trade-union movement—the Socialist, the Catholic and the Nationalist unions. By openly taking the line that tariff agreements cannot be abrogated, Dr. Bruening contrived once again to win the support of the Social Democrats.

The problem of wages and of social legislation is now being discussed by the Special Economic Council appointed by the President. Despite the fact that government arbitrators have refused to entertain the possibility of fresh cuts in wages on the ground that further reductions are unthinkable unless the cost of living, government levies and tram and railway rates fall too, there can be no doubt that the cuts, averaging from 20 to 30 percent, will be made. Nor can it be doubted that, while the *principle* of tariffs is certain to be respected, the substance of these rules will be very considerably modified.

The class struggle in Germany, as in some other countries, seems to have entered a new stage, that in which the industrialists are assuming the offensive, while the workers are definitely on the defensive. The economic depression and Germany's 5,000,000 unemployed form a favorable background for such an offensive. The workers are no longer in a position to assert themselves. Their only weapon, the strike, has been wrested from them; for the unions' funds are almost exhausted and it is obviously impossible for strikers to hold out when one-third of the workers are looking for jobs. Moreover, these economic factors are reenforced in favor of the industrialists by the backing they can obtain from the National Socialists, a backing the more welcome since this party claims to be the champions of the workers' interests.

Nothing, however, could demonstrate more flagrantly the unreality of this claim than the Nazi association with the industrialists and the use which the industrialists are prepared to make of it. Some members of the Nazi party are now trying to rescue the movement from this association. But such a separation is not likely to materialize and the efforts to bring it about look more like an internal quarrel than a divergence of principle. The Hitlerites have eaten out of the hands of the industrialists for several years; they can hardly now repudiate their old paymasters. Hugenberg would certainly not allow them to do so: already he threatens to split them if they break away. But why should they break away? As a matter of fact there is little difference in principle between the Nazis proper and their capitalist associates, whom Dr. Bruening calls the representatives of "the social reaction." The difference is only this, that whereas Hugenberg is openly fighting against the Republic and the Labor movement, Hitler is fighting against the "Weimar spirit" and against "the Marxian front." Moreover, Hitler is obviously jealous of Hugenberg's ascendency in the ranks of "the Na-

[1] Tariffs, in German trade-union law, consist in compulsory collective bargaining between employers and unions and a system of obligatory government arbitration in case of disputes.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

tional Opposition." He has made it studiously plain that the leadership of his own party is not vacant and that his party is not a mere branch of "N.O."

This jealousy has been skillfully worked upon by Dr. Bruening, who has recently held up before Hitler the possibility of sharing the government on the condition that the Nazi movement purges itself of its unconstitutional character and cuts itself off from its reactionary allies. For a time the possibility of a Hitler-Bruening combination was a familiar topic in the press of both parties, but it soon became apparent that the Chancellor's trial balloon had not been intended too seriously. The leaders of the Center formally declared their opposition to any political experiments, more especially at a time when Germany had to face the outside world; while the Nazis disclaimed the idea of responding to any overtures from a government which they had every expectation of overthrowing.

What this expectation is worth it is not easy to say. The political tide seems to be flowing strongly in their favor. But when one realizes the distance they have to cover before they can obtain a majority in the Reichstag, one begins to regard their expectations as ridiculously oversanguine. Even in the smaller federal states, where their electoral successes have been sensational, they have not succeeded in obtaining a majority in a single case. The figures of the latest election to these bodies are instructive; for, while they reveal great changes as between parties, they reflect little alteration in the division between the working-class vote (counting Social Democrat and Communist votes together) and that for the capitalists. The main gains of the Nazis have in fact been made at the expense of the bourgeois parties, while the losses of the Social Democrats are due to the increase of the Communist vote. These elections, indeed, leave the political situation more or less as it was.

While, then, the recent successes won by the Nazis are far from warranting any expectation of a conquest of power, they have proved considerable enough to create a still further intensification of the unrest prevailing in Germany. Hitler's idea seems to be to get on the nerves of his countrymen and to paralyze the will of the governing classes by giving a sort of dress rehearsal of the coming frightfulness.

The economic crisis, which has thrown millions of workers out of employment and is fast ruining thousands of shopkeepers, small tradesmen and professional men, is the milieu in which Hitlerism flourishes. The political and electoral effects of the crisis, and Hitler's theatrical exploitation of it, do not seem to be worrying Dr. Bruening overmuch. He is concentrating all his efforts on what he considers to be its root cause, the injury done to German industry and trade by the payment of reparations and by the heavy burden of external debt. The big card he has now to play against "the national opposition" and "the social reaction" is the hope of settling these questions before Hitler can manage to profit by the unrest which they have caused.

MICHAEL FARBMAN.

Parade of Senators

A FAVORITE topic of the so-called political publicists is the moral and intellectual level of the Senate. The theory is that the personnel has sadly deteriorated ever since we began to elect Senators by the direct vote of the people. You hear journalists and politicians whose memories go back more than a generation bewailing the passing of the "giants" and contending that in these parlous times there are fewer sincere statesmen, but many more shallow and demagogic ones. Certainly it seems true that since the adoption of the Seventeenth Amendment more men of low caliber have got in than could have got in before. In view of these facts, it is interesting to consider what effect the new members of the Senate will have upon its moral and intellectual status.

Not many who know anything about the personalities of those who go out and those who come in will deny the fact that on the whole the level has been raised. The net result is an improvement. It is true that Governor Huey Long of Louisiana, the polished gentleman who receives distinguished visitors in his pajamas, takes sponge baths while entertaining callers and beats up his opponents with his fists, will be a member of the next Senate—and that is nothing to write home about. From what I am told, the youthful Mr. Long—he is only thirty-eight—will be a net loss from whatever angle he is viewed. Without the histrionic talent of some of the outstanding representatives from his section, or the engaging personal qualities of others, Huey, I am informed, is merely a tough young fellow with a hill-billy background, an exceedingly limited education, not much natural ability, no real personal charm, but a great gift for rough-and-tumble politics.

However, when one considers the fact that Heflin and Blease have been replaced by men of character and capacity, the great gain here offsets the liability of Long's presence. Mr. Bankhead, who has taken Heflin's seat pending senatorial action on the alleged irregularities in his election, is a lawyer of repute, a citizen of sense and balance, a gentleman. Son of the late Senator Bankhead, he has had local legislative experience, has a brother in the House, knows his way about the legislative mill

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

and possesses no particular obsessions, complexes or mental defects. He is not brilliant. He may even be a little dull, but he is respectable. He will not thrill the Senate or the country. He will not initiate any great legislation or exhibit any marked degree of political independence, or even a trace of liberalism. But neither will he make a holy show of himself and the "conservative and substantial" citizens of Birmingham, including the public-utility magnates and steel men, will neither blush nor apologize when his name is mentioned—quite the contrary. He will be personally more popular, I think, in the Senate than his colleague, Senator Hugo Black, but he will not get so much publicity.

As for "Jimmy" Byrnes, of South Carolina, it would be fine to have him in the Senate anyhow, but to have him in place of the blatant Blease is really a great break. Clean, straight, likable, companionable, intelligent, modest, trained in public life, Mr. Byrnes would adorn any legislative body. His service in the House was first rate. Except Carter Glass of Virginia, there will be no better equipped Senator on the Democratic side than he, and not many so well equipped.

Then there is Cordell Hull, Senator from Tennessee. No man in public life is more respected by those who know him than Judge Hull. A veteran member of the House, an old-fashioned Democrat, a former chairman of the National Committee, a favorite son of his state in more than one Democratic national convention, Senator Hull's name, face and career are familiar enough. His service in the House has been of the highest character. An authority on the tariff and tariff making, he is one of the few Democrats left who not only has political principles, but lives up to them. Mr. Hull's is not an exciting or inspiring personality. He does not flash, scintillate or burn, but he is the highest type of public servant that has come out of Tennessee in several generations.

So much from the South. It does seem clear that this section has improved its Senate personnel—and it was about time. In other parts of the country the gain is not so spectacular, but it is cheering. For example, the colorful, cunning, picturesque and inimitable James Hamilton Lewis of Illinois is certainly to be preferred to that dull, stodgy, utterly commonplace politician, Mr. Deneen. There are plenty who do not take Mr. Lewis seriously, who regard him as an intellectual lightweight, an incorrigible and somewhat shoddy showman. None the less, he is smarter and shrewder than Deneen and infinitely more gay. And never did a legislative body exist that was more in need of a little gaiety than the Senate. One of the main troubles is taking itself too seriously. Nobody is going to mistake "Jim Ham" for a great constructive statesman. Nevertheless, the presence of this "perfect gentleman" will help that situation considerably.

Mr. Lewis was in the Senate from 1912 to 1918. It is not recorded that he ever did anything particularly useful, but everyone remembers him. Nowadays the pink whiskers are white, the musical voice jangles occasionally and squeaks just a little, the jauntiness of that gorgeously garbed figure is a bit diminished by the years, but in all essentials he is the same glittering personality of the old days—not big, broad, deep or heavy—but amusing, unique, imperturbably urbane, unshakably good humored—and shrewd. He was in the Senate before the direct primary was written into our Constitution—and he did not lower the level in those days. Certainly he will not do it now that he is back. And in passing it is interesting to note that he was elected by a larger majority than has ever been given any other candidate for the Senate in any other state, which, of course, is another way of saying that Mrs. McCormick, the first woman to be nominated for the Senate, was the worst beaten aspirant for that office in history.

And then, in Ohio, Mr. Robert Bulkley, a clear-headed, active lawyer and man of affairs, with a reasonably attractive personality, replaces that typically Ohio Anti-Saloon League Republican, Mr. Roscoe Conkling McCulloch. Any unbiased person will chalk that up as a gain, just as he will concede that Senator Costigan of Colorado is an improvement over the hard-boiled Phipps. However, the thing I fear most about Mr. Bulkley is that he has been mentioned as a presidential candidate, a fact which may make the gain less than it really ought to be. He will, of course, take it seriously (they all do), though as a matter of fact the chances of his nomination are exceedingly remote. Good though he relatively is, it is stretching things considerably to regard Mr. Bulkley as presidential timber, particularly as there are at least two Democrats in his own state with more of a national reputation, better personal qualifications and a stronger title. However, Mr. Bulkley may keep his feet on the ground, and in that event he will be a Senate asset, for he has a good head for figures, a knowledge of federal finance—gained when he was in the House—and a fairly efficient business brain. Just as Mr. Hull is the best thing we have seen from Tennessee in a generation, Mr. Bulkley is the best from Ohio since the late Theodore E. Burton.

With Mr. Costigan, the Senator from Colorado, the Senate gains a man of considerable independence who is not merely a regular Democrat. Mr. Costigan's career on the Tariff Board, I gather, was a creditable one, but the reason he left was, in my judgment, even more creditable. It seemed to him that Mr. Coolidge, under whom he was then serving, had so restricted and shackled the Commission as to make any real action impossible. I am told that Mr. Costigan in disgust declined the reappointment he could have obtained and went back to Colorado, where he has been a singularly active citizen in various ways. Politically, Mr. Costigan has been a Republican, a progressive, and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

known as liberal tendencies, and may not go along with his party leadership as docilely as could be desired on all occasions. In the main, however, he will be regular, though his regularity will be of the aggressive type, and silence is not one of his weaknesses. He will be heard from. From time to time he will raise his voice and he will at least make the Colorado representation seem more vigorous than it has been for quite a while.

No tears will be shed by members of either party over the departure from the Senate of Mr. Daniel Steck of Iowa. While there is nothing about Mr. Dickinson, who succeeds Mr. Steck, to arouse any wild enthusiasm, certainly most people will agree that there is an improvement in caliber. Mr. Dickinson has had long training in the House and to some extent has gained the leadership of the agricultural bloc. He is not an outstanding man and will not take first rank in the Senate. In most matters he will be as friendly to the Hoover administration as his colleague, the estimable Brookhart, is hostile. Essentially Mr. Dickinson is an Iowa politician with a full appreciation of the value of publicity and a well organized press bureau. He is not a great statesman, but he is better than Steck.

Probably there is no noticeable gain so far as character and caliber are concerned in the substitution of the wealthy manufacturer, Marcus Aurelius Coolidge, Democratic Senator from Massachusetts, for the venerable Frederick H. Gillett, who holds all records for unbroken continuity in public office. Mr. Gillett was not exciting, but he was sound; not brilliant, but good. Mr. Coolidge, though widely different politically, is personally much the same sort of man. He is a successful man of affairs, but not what would be termed forceful. Pleasant, easy going, level headed, amiable, calm: nearly everybody likes him. He does not know a great deal about politics—not nearly as much as Mr. Gillett, but he is not a trouble maker. He will represent Massachusetts in about the same way that Mr. Gillett did, except that he will vote Wet. He will not "slosh around" in debate. He is neither a breast-beater nor a "father-caller." He will not pull the Senate up very much, but he assuredly will not drag it down.

The supplanting of the Honorable Guy Despard Goff of West Virginia by Mr. Neely will neither unduly depress nor elate close observers. Mr. Neely's previous service in the Senate did not particularly endear him to his colleagues. He lacks the preposterous pomposity of Mr. Goff, but he is not a Senator of the first—or even third—rank. There are those who, while conceding his ability as a rough-and-tumble campaigner, consider him cheap rather than clever. But even these do not contend that the substitution involves any depreciation.

Impartial and informed judges are convinced that Mr. Bailey of North Carolina will develop into a far stronger Senator than the unfortunate Furnifold H. Simmons, though that old gentleman has his points and is considerably above the Senate average. A man of parts, his friends say, gifted as a speaker and with an absorbent and understanding mind, Joe Bailey will be no Senate mediocrity. There is of course nothing for the country, his commonwealth or his colleagues to cheer about in the return to the Senate of the blind Mr. Gore, and there is reason to think that Mr. Carey of Wyoming is a step down in several directions from that rugged old regular, the late Francis G. Warren. Whether Mr. McGill of Kansas will be an improvement on the entertaining Henry Allen; whether Mr. Logan of Kentucky will turn out better than the defeated Robsion; whether there is any nourishment in the replacement of the dour McMaster by the comic Bulow of South Dakota, remains to be seen. But at any rate it will be agreed that these changes carry no menace. The worst that can come from them is an even break.

Of course, we have "Banjo Jim" Davis of Pennsylvania. He is not a tenth the man Old Joe Grundy is, and the thought of him in the Senate is not stimulating. As a Cabinet officer he was a nonentity, distinguished solely for his ability to cling to his job under circumstances which would have discouraged a more sensitive man. As a Senator he will be loud but shallow, regular but unreliable. Teamed up with the cheerless Mr. Reed, the pair certainly will give Pennsylvania so curious a representation as even that great state hardly deserves. When its full significance is grasped, a strong tonic will be needed to restore faith in our institutions and renew confidence in the so-called "intelligence of the American people," to which our father-calling statesmen are so fond of referring. It is true that Morrow's death took away a man of the highest type, but his successor, Mr. Barbour, is well above the New Jersey grade of the past twenty years. On the whole the Senate level is up.

So far as the House is concerned, while there have been a great many changes, there is no way as yet of assaying the effect. Of the sixty-odd new members, little will be known for some time. Most of them are from Indiana, Ohio, Illinois, Kentucky and Missouri, where the big Republican upset occurred. Probably the most notable and important new House member of the next session is David J. Lewis of Maryland. Mr. Lewis beat the none too savory Zihlman in a heavily Republican district, and his return to the House after an absence of ten years is quite an event. He is the father of the parcel-post law, and when he left the House in 1918, he was the most earnest and effective advocate in Congress of the nationalization of the telephone and telegraph companies. It is a tribute to his knowledge and force that the companies were thoroughly shaken out of their smugness by his activities and greeted his retirement with genuine relief. The other new House members will have to turn out badly indeed to keep the average from going up with David Lewis again a member.

FRANK R. KENT.

LICENSED TO UMICH.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

The Cotton Kingdom: 1931

I: *Six-cent Cotton, a Southern Tragedy*

DURING the course of the past year cotton sank to prices that have not been equaled since 1898. In the local markets of the South it has been selling for five and six cents a pound, and the average bale of cotton which brought $215 during the flush years following the War, has recently brought about $27.50. Lower than middling grades have sold for about $25. As the average tenant farmer in a year of good yield like the last one raises six or perhaps eight bales of cotton during the season, he will receive for this year's money crop hardly more than $200. However, this does not mean that under the most favorable circumstances the tenant farmer will receive even half of the sum for which his six or eight bales of cotton have been sold. Whether he is a share-cropper or renter he must give a large percentage of this sum, if not the whole of it, to his landlord.

The average bale of cotton produces 850 pounds of cotton seed. During boom times cotton seed at certain periods rose to $96 a ton, but this fall the price of cotton seed dropped to $5 and $9 a ton. Among most Southern landowners it is customary to give the seed to the tenant for him to sell. After deducting enough to pay for the ginning, the tenant keeps the balance, and often this is the only real money he receives from his cotton crop. When seed sold for $40 or even $20 a ton, he would have a substantial sum left for clothing, food, medicine, tobacco, church, or crap games. During the past few years, ginning has cost $4 a bale. This fall most gins have reduced the price to $3, and some to $2.50. But even at this low cost seed must bring at least $7 a ton to pay for ginning, and with seed selling at this price tenants have been receiving ridiculously small sums as the balance from their seed after ginning. When seed fell below $7, they have had to pay to complete the $3 ginning bill. Some farmers have held their seed. The majority have not been able to hold.

The tenant cotton farmer faces the winter without any money at all. There are two types of cotton tenants. One is the share-cropper and the other is the renter. Neither has any money from his seed and only a few individuals of either type will have any from their cotton.

The share-cropper works under the following arrangement: The landlord furnishes the land, a house, mules, feed for the mules, plows, tools and half of the fertilizer. In addition, he advances the tenant food for himself and family during the working season, which extends from March through July. The advance is usually $10 or $12 per month per plow, for white bacon, corn meal, molasses and minor household necessities. When the crop is gathered, the landlord takes his half of everything produced. The cotton is sold and half of the receipts go to the landlord. From the tenant's half he deducts the money he has advanced and half the cost of the fertilizer. A tenant with a small family who ran one plow and made ten bales of cotton that sold for $275 has $137.50 as his half, from which deductions for advances and fertilizer must be made. In actual practice the average share-cropper will not pay out this year. He faces the winter without a dollar from his cotton or his seed. The average tenant probably made six bales of cotton instead of ten.

The case of the renter is different in its details but no better in its results. He, too, has not a dollar from his crop.

There are only two rays of light in the gloomy estate of the cotton tenant this year. One is that in most cases he used no commercial fertilizer. The other is that he has raised a bountiful food crop. But his clothing is ragged and scanty, for he has not been able to buy the clothes he has needed since 1929. Moreover, he will need medicine and tobacco, a little sugar and coffee, matches and soap. He must have a little cash on hand. So this winter he will sell his corn and peas for twenty-five cents a bushel, or he will steal. Perhaps he will do both.

The small landowner who works his own crop is slightly better off than the tenant, for he has no rent to pay. But he must provide his own tools, livestock and fertilizer, and besides he has taxes. He has in most cases borrowed money to make his crop, borrowed it, too, on the basis of ten-cent cotton, and must meet the note. And if, as is probably the case, he has a mortgage hanging over his farm in addition to his obligations for the current year, he is in as tight straits as the tenant. Psychologically he is in worse condition, for the possible loss of home and farm is a constant worry. The tenant has nothing to lose but his life.

The large landowners, too, are not spared the woes which six-cent cotton has brought. Many of them, of course, have a heavy loan against their property, but even when their plantations are free of debt they are far from happy this fall. Except in the Mississippi Delta section, it is probable that only half of the 1,000-acre plantations are in cultivation, and only part of this is in cotton. Of the 150 bales produced, only seventy-five bales go to the owner as his share. The following statement, based on cases examined by the writer, tabulates the obligations of such a landowner at the end of the year:

LICENSED TO JNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Interest	$ 50
Taxes	150
Seed	100
Deficit from tenant advances	300
Fertilizer, limited amount	200
Tools and housing	200
Livestock and feed	300
Miscellaneous	200
Total	$1,500

His seventy-five bales bring the owner $2062.50, but after deducting the above expenses he will receive only $562.50 for his own living, which is about two thousand dollars less than his annual living expenses. Besides his worry about the present condition, he is troubled about next year's crop. He does not know what to do.

Six-cent cotton affects the banks of the South as seriously as individuals. Few loans to farmers could be paid in full this fall. Partial payments were made and the banks will carry the balance over until 1932. Few foreclosures will be made, for the collateral is usually land, which the banks do not want, since it is almost valueless in terms of dollars. Next spring the banks will be very circumspect in making loans. People who have never been refused will be unable to borrow. Many loans are frozen stiff and unless the price of cotton rises appreciably by October, 1932, the South is probably in for another epidemic of bank failures.

Six-cent cotton is a Southern tragedy in its social and economic consequences. It may prove to be as devastating to the Southern financial structure as was the Civil War. However, the South must and will continue to grow cotton in spite of the tragic autumn of 1931. RENWICK C. KENNEDY.

II: *Cotton Peonage*

AT BEST Southern croppers and renters, Negroes and whites, exist under conditions of semi-peonage. The narrow margin upon which they operate was forcefully demonstrated in the drought country in 1930. Hundreds of thousands of tenants after a few weeks of drought faced actual belly-hunger starvation and had to raid stores or take pitifully small doles from the Red Cross. The horror stories sent out by that organization described the wretched little cabins, the corn-shuck or wheat-straw beds, the broken dishes, the crude furniture, the ragged clothes, the poor food and the illiterate farmers. Things had always been thus, but the Red Cross didn't know it.

At harvest time comes the division of the crop, or "settlement time." At this point the tenant feels the pinch of exploitation most. The landlord does the grading and marketing of the crop. Then he makes the settlement. He is the bookkeeper. For the money and supplies he has advanced to the tenant to carry him over in making the crop, he charges him interest rates in addition to frequently falsifying the accounts. Secretary of Agriculture Arthur M. Hyde estimates that merchant credit costs the tenant 25 percent and fertilizer 35 percent. His figures are conservative in comparison to some made by the North Carolina College of Agriculture after a study of Pitt County farms in 1928. The latter figures show that interest rates range from 19.1 percent for cash advances to 72.1 percent for supplies advanced by merchants. After the settlement, the cropper usually finds that he owes money to the landlord for his year's work.

If the tenant is rash enough to demand a check-up, or disputes the planter's word, he may become known as a "vagrant," or if a Negro, a "bad nigger," and therefore the legitimate prey of armed deputies. Frequently, in order to escape imprisonment as vagrants, tenants agree to accept any conditions of work offered. In this time of unemployment many workers are being forced into involuntary servitude. The process is well shown by an Associated Press dispatch from Macon, Georgia:

> Macon police were continuing Saturday their efforts as a volunteer employment bureau for middle Georgia growers. J. H. Stroud of Alma appealed to Chief of Police Ben T. Watkins for fifty to sixty unemployed to serve as cotton pickers. Stroud was here Saturday to take the pickers back with him. The city police are rounding up loiterers and offering them jobs or the view of the passing throngs from the inside of the jail.

The foregoing, of course, is not to be taken as descriptive of the life of every cropper and every renter, every white and every black, in the South. For of course there is always the small minority of landlords who may be compared to the benevolent and paternalistic cotton-mill owners, but in general peonage in its worst forms prevails to an alarming and increasing extent.

The average tenant is unlettered, untraveled and knows little of the outside world. He has no money, no clothes, no means of transportation; he knows no other work and has no other job. Some of the contracts which he makes with his landlord specify that if the tenant fails in his contract, he loses his crop and personal property, little as that is. Naturally he prefers to stick in the hope of salvaging something, even to the point of endangering his life. In many cases, however, the planter uses brute force and terrorism to keep his tenants on the land. Sometimes as a last resort he holds entire families as hostages, or he cooks up fake court charges in order to intimidate his serfs. Such trumped-up charges as "swearing before a female," "shooting across a public road," "vagrancy" and "theft" are among those frequently used. Then there is the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

gentleman's agreement among the planters that they will not employ each others' tenants, especially if the tenants happen to be in debt to the rival planter. Moreover, the emigrant-agency laws, which are on the statute books of nearly every Southern state, curtail the operations of agents who would ship tenants, and especially Negroes, to other sections or to the North. When these legal provisions fail, the persons trying to entice tenants away are often shot or lynched.

There are many forms of peonage. It sometimes happens that a planter needs a few more hands. He sues out a blanket vagrancy warrant for as many workers as he needs. The warrant is modeled on one used by a planter of Gilchrist County, Florida, which specifically names six persons all of whom are in equal degree "rogues and vagabonds, idle or dissolute persons, persons who use unlawful games or plays, common pipers and fiddlers. . . . Persons who neglect their calling, or are without reasonable continuous employment or regular income and who have not sufficient property to sustain them. . . . Contrary to the statutes of this state."

Convicted on these or similar charges, the newly made convict is ordered to pay a heavy fine and court costs. At this point the planter who needs the six hands generously volunteers to pay the fines and costs provided the victim will sign a contract agreeing to work out the amount on the planter's farm. From then on the relationship is master and slave.

The convict-lease system, under which prisoners were hired out entirely into the custody of private planters or business men to feed, use, guard and discipline as they saw fit, may be considered as another form of peonage. The lease system has been abolished, "legally," in nearly every state, though the Wickersham Commission reported its practice in three Southern states.

In spite of all the precautions taken by the planters and in spite of terrorism, stories leak out and prosecutions for peonage are occasionally made. The total number of such prosecutions cannot be learned, as the Department of Justice has refused to make its reports public in recent years.

It was only after a congressional committee in 1908 investigated peonage among white immigrants —not Negroes, among whom such conditions were taken for granted—that much attention was paid to the peonage problem in this country. The committee found peonage as the "Supreme Court defined it" in every state in the Union except Oklahoma and Connecticut. The worst conditions were found in Maine lumber camps.

In 1920 widespread peonage in Early, Dooley, Worth, Decatur, Toombs and Morgan counties in Georgia were reported. Governor Hugh Dorsey followed this in 1921 with his statement on "The Negro in Georgia," in which he listed nineteen known cases of peonage in its worst form. Shortly afterwards the notorious John S. Williams' murder-farm cases were exposed. At least eleven croppers were killed on this farm, because they were "too old to work" or "because they knew too much," when it became certain that the Department of Justice would be forced to investigate.

In 1927 at Corpus Christi and Raymondville, Texas, four white men, including a sheriff, two deputies and a justice of the peace, were found guilty of peonage practices. Four young white boys, all under twenty-one years of age, one of them a former page in the National House of Representatives, went to a cotton-picking job where they had been promised pay of $1.25 per hundred pounds and free board. On the job they found that they were being forced to pay board. They became dissatisfied and quit the job. They were arrested at Raymondville on vagrancy charges and given the alternative of working for their original employer or being prosecuted and sent to the chain gang.

A major catastrophe is more effective than the Department of Justice for bringing the truth about peonage to light. In 1927, for example, the Mississippi River flooded a vast territory, including much of the peonage country. Several hundred thousand white and black tenants became dependent on Red Cross charity. It is a matter of record that at first the planters refused to let their tenants be removed from the plantations, though their lives were endangered by the flood waters. The Red Cross obligingly promised the planters to return the croppers, even against their will, to the plantations whence they came. In the encampments the croppers were closely guarded by national guardsmen. No one could leave camp without a permit. Several croppers were shot. Thousands were conscripted into levee building and work for private employers without pay. Many escaped. When the waters receded, the Red Cross, the national guard and the overseers from various plantations rounded up the reluctant croppers, herded them into barges and returned them to their masters.

Last year the drought also uncovered widespread peonage conditions. Reports from the drought area revealed that terrible conditions existed, especially in Louisiana and Arkansas. A professor in one of the schools in Conway, Arkansas, told Russell Owen, correspondent for The New York Times, that "some of the farmers have been in debt so many years that they no longer sought a statement of their accounts. They were in bondage so deep they did not care." The Times reported further that "the share-cropper can't move to another plantation unless his debts are assumed by the new planters." It was found in other sections of the drought country that the Negro croppers were living as well on the doles—little as they were—as under normal conditions and that the planters had to bargain with the Red Cross to restrict their doles in order to keep the cropper satisfied on the plantations. Owen reported much

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

grumbling about the "Red Cross freeing the Negro."

However, one does not need to go back further than last year to find reports of peonage. In March, 1930, James E. Piggott, prominent Louisiana planter, pleaded guilty of holding Negro farm hands in peonage. Piggott told Federal Judge Borah that "I handled niggers in the way every other planter handles them." He admitted that on occasions his croppers escaped into Mississippi and that he and Louisiana officers went after them and brought them back without requisition papers. Another typical case which occurred this year in Louisiana was that of J. M. McLemore. An investigation disclosed that McLemore habitually carried a pistol with which to shoot anyone attempting to escape.

The two cases cited above represent only a few out of the total number of prosecutions. In 1929, Orlando Kay Armstrong, professor of Journalism in the University of Florida, made a damning exposé of peonage laws and practices in Florida. He cited cases of Negroes being sold to turpentine companies at from $50 to $150 each. Astonished by the fact that there were almost no prosecutions, he asked lawyers, legislators and laymen for the reason. This reply was given by a business man:

> Do you know why they can't get any conviction? Here's why. Suppose they arrest some operators. All right. Now bring them into court. They're men of wealth and respectability. They own big property. They elect the county and state officers. Who's the jury? Men who owe 'em money! Accuse 'em of peonage. They bring in records to show they don't owe a Negro a penny. The owner, the overseers, the bookkeeper, the commissary clerk, all testify. And what else? Every big company has favorite Negroes who get good wages and act as straw bosses. They put them on the stand. They've been working for that company for years; paid every month and never mistreated. And against that line-up, you got a poor devil of an ignorant Negro off a chain gang! Think you can convict?

Though many attempts have been made by the tenants to remedy these conditions, their efforts have always been drowned in blood at birth. Let us review two of them briefly. In 1919, croppers in Phillips County, Arkansas, organized a highly conservative union. The charter was drawn up by Williamson and Williamson, white lawyers and ex-slaveholders. Members of the union were required to be church-goers and to swear to defend the Constitution of the United States. But the union was militant, for it aimed to do away with peonage. When the union met in a church for the purpose of completing plans to retain a lawyer who had been a federal attorney, postmaster and captain in the American forces in France, it was attacked by an armed mob of planters. The church was burned to the ground and the croppers hunted down like wild beasts. It is estimated that close to 200 were slaughtered. The Governor of Arkansas charged that the cause back of all the trouble was the circulation of "such incendiary" literature as The Crisis, official organ of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, in that section.

The most recent case, however, of the sharecroppers' efforts to better their economic and social status, is the riot at Camp Hill, where a meeting of Negro croppers was raided by armed men. The church in which the meeting was being held was burnt to the ground, one Negro was murdered in cold blood and four were "sent out to cut stove wood"—a euphemistic term for lynching.

WALTER WILSON.

III: *Sunday at Camp Hill*

CAMP HILL, Alabama, had a revival last July in the Methodist Church. (The village of 900 people has three white and two Negro churches, and is proud of them.) "There weren't many additions to the church," a member confessed to me, "because this year most of the younger fry were already members. We have a revival every year and usually rake in the young people when they get to be about ten years old."

One Sunday night the revival service was interrupted by Wilson, the town marshal, who entered at the rear of the church and called for the doctor. He announced that Sheriff Kyle Young had been shot to pieces. Men jumped to their feet, many left the church, but the preacher kept the service going. "Now just keep quiet," he is reported as saying, "it's just somebody trying to bring Chicago down here." The more cautious church-goers apparently went straight home after service and early to bed. The more sportsmanlike joined in an exciting two-day nigger hunt which filled the county jail at Dadeville with frightened and often wounded Negroes and put the little town on the front pages of the metropolitan press.

Camp Hill is agreed that nothing much really happened, that the newspapers made a lot out of nothing. "No, we didn't have any trouble here. Just some damn niggers got smart and we had to shoot a few to teach them their place."

I spent the last Sunday in September loafing on the main street of Camp Hill. I went to Sunday school and church; sat on the bench in front of the café; lounged around the filling station, the railroad station, the drug stores, wherever anyone would talk. Some suspicion there was, but after I had identified myself as a Southe[illegible]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

salesman, not a Yankee or a Birmingham reporter, talk became free.

Only the marshal remained reticent. "It wasn't nothing much," he said. "The sheriff heard the niggers were having a Communist meeting and we went with him to break the meeting up—and shooting started." That was about all he would say. He did say he guessed the idea of the Communists was to put in practice their principles, "to take people's property away from them and divide it up."

A boy at the filling station gave me a vivid picture of going out nigger-hunting the second night with a party of seven or eight men. The sheriff did not bother to swear in all the voluntary hunters as deputies; men just got their guns and set out in groups of six or eight. They searched the surrounding country, the woods, the fields, all the Negro cabins. It was a dark night. The Negro men were out hiding; very rarely would one be found in his cabin. The women were at home, the children, and perhaps an old man sick in bed. In the two nights over a hundred men were caught and taken to jail, a number were shot or beaten up, and several disappeared and have not shown up yet. "I don't *think* more than one nigger was killed, I really don't," the boy told me. "Of course, though, I don't know, because there were so many parties out hunting that night; and if a man shot a nigger he probably wouldn't say anything about it. Of course they killed the nigger that shot the sheriff, but I think the others got scared and ran away, and most of them have been too scared to come back."

An older man in one of the three drug stores, a kindly fellow, talked with me for a long time. "There wasn't anything to it," he said. "The newspapers made a lot out of nothing. The grand jury met a couple of weeks ago and couldn't find evidence against anybody. Most of the niggers around here are all right, that is they are submissive and respectful. They say some of the niggers had guns and did some shooting, but I think maybe that was exaggerated. Anyway, nobody would go before the grand jury and swear that he saw a nigger shoot, and the grand jury let 'em all loose. Of course they could have found evidence that white men beat up some of the niggers, but they didn't care to go into that.

"About a year ago some of the niggers formed what they called the share-croppers' union. They met from time to time in a house at the bottom of my field and talked about raising turnips and potatoes and such like. Nobody objected to that. Then some white man came down from Chattanooga. The niggers say he told them to demand a dollar a day when they worked and rations of food. He brought some literature down and told them that he was a Communist and that was what their meeting was about. They say he told them that everything here in the South was made by the niggers' labor and they ought to have it, and that the [illegible] to de-

mand it. The niggers are easily led, and maybe believed that stuff for a while. They are just like children and will believe anything you tell them. Anyway, the sheriff heard about these meetings and decided to put a stop to them. He did break up two or three meetings. He broke up one meeting Saturday night, the night before the shooting, and there was some grumbling and some talk about how they would meet anyhow. Sunday night the sheriff heard about another meeting and drove down to the meeting place with a deputy and the Camp Hill marshal, Wilson. When they got near the place they met a nigger picket. Just what happened I don't know, but the sheriff says the nigger had a bundle and a gun. The sheriff says when he asked the nigger what was in the bundle the nigger said it was none of his damn business. So the sheriff reached back into the car for his gun and the nigger shot him in the side and back. Then the sheriff shot the nigger in the legs. I don't think the sheriff thought he was shot much—he had his side full of bird-shot—and he did not want to kill the nigger.

"After that the deputy and the marshal left the nigger on the ground and took the sheriff back to town. They took him to the marshal's home and got the doctor, and the marshal let out that the sheriff was about to die. He always exaggerates things like that; the sheriff was all right in a couple of weeks. While the doctor was giving the sheriff first aid, a big crowd gathered about the house, and after a while the marshal went out and said the sheriff was still living. Then the crowd began to go wild. They all had guns; never saw anything like it.

"After a while the crowd found out that the nigger who shot the sheriff had been taken to his home, wounded; so a bunch of them went down there. I don't know just what happened, but *they* say the nigger cussed them and told them to get the hell out of there. And they say they were fired on from the woods near the cabin. I think maybe that was exaggerated. Anyway, the door was locked and they broke down the door and got the nigger and took him to Dadeville, dead. In Dadeville they said that the nigger had a lot of buck-shot wounds on his feet and legs that were all painted with mercurochrome; but up here [indicating his breast] he had a gash as big as your fist that wasn't painted. I guess they killed him."

Then a crowd went down to the meeting place, about five miles from town, and broke up the meeting. It appears from all accounts that there was much shooting. "If the night had not been so pitch black," one man told me, "I guess a lot of people would have been killed." In the darkness a number of Negroes were wounded, some seriously, but I did not hear of any white men getting hurt. That night, and the next day and night, bands of white men roved the countryside hunting niggers.

Marshal Wilson was quoted as telling reporters that Negroes who were missing "had gone to cut wood and had a lot of wood to cut." He denies

LICENSED TO UMI FOR ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

now that he said it, but citizens lounging on the street say it sounds too much like him to be made up. But the loungers thought only one Negro was killed. "Though I don't know, mister; there were so many different parties out hunting. A lot of niggers got scared and ran off, but I think most of them turned up after things quieted down. And the nigger that shot the sheriff, there weren't enough niggers at his funeral hardly to bury him. It's a funny thing the niggers won't bury a nigger a white man kills."

The loungers on Main Street generally thought there would be no more trouble. "Some damn Yankees and Communists came down from Chicago or New York and tried to get some money from the ignorant niggers. That's all them bastards wanted, the niggers' money. They tried to fill the niggers' heads with stuff, but they cleared out when the trouble started and they won't be back around here. It's a pity we couldn't catch one of them."

"They couldn't have been any high-class white men. It takes a pretty low-down son of a bitch to take the side of a nigger. Some of the niggers said one of the white men put a pistol on the table and said, 'This is part of my speech. This is what it will take to get what you want, and every one of you ought to have one.' "

At the Methodist Sunday school in Camp Hill we sang: "Jesus, Jesus, Sweetest Name I Know," and "More About Jesus," and "Jesus Calls Us." And in one of the other churches I heard this prayer:

> We thank Thee our Heavenly Father for our bright and shining land . . . for seed time and harvest . . . for our nation. . . . We thank Thee for the ideals of our forefathers who fought and bled that we might have here a country where there is equality of opportunity . . . freedom and justice for all.

HENRY FULLER.

Washington Notes

Hoover's Running Mate—Mr. Curtis Likes His Job—The World Court Fight—Snell's Victory—As New Jersey Goes

WHEN THIS piece appears in print, the Seventy-second Congress, with the Democrats and progressives in control, will have set forth upon its stormy way and the presidential message on the state of the Union will have been delivered, digested and discarded. Neither of these things has happened yet, however, and it is merely the part of prudence not to dwell upon them unduly. At present it seems wiser for me to comment upon certain recent developments along political and other lines.

One is the announcement from Mr. Curtis that he will not be a candidate for the Kansas senatorial nomination next spring, but will accept renomination for the vice-presidency "if tendered me." I think I forecast this decision of the Vice President quite a long time ago. It was not a difficult guess. All one had to do was to balance the uncertainties of the Kansas senatorship against the uncertainties of being reëlected Vice President and then cast into the scales on the vice-presidential side Charlie's and Dolly's deep contentment with their present position.

I do not think I am revealing any secret when I say that the Vice President's decision was not news at the White House. It had confidentially been communicated to Mr. Hoover quite a while before—and it created neither surprise nor enthusiasm. Further, it can be said that no White House pressure was brought to bear upon Charlie to decide in favor of the vice-presidency. Had he determined otherwise, the President and the President's political advisers would have borne up with fortitude and cheerfulness. Though the Democrats would have spread the rumor that Mr. Curtis was leaving a sinking ship, it would not have seriously disturbed the administration. On the contrary, there would have been a search for a substitute with more potential strength and public appeal than Mr. Curtis—and it was generally felt that there would have been no difficuly in finding one.

As things have turned out, I should say that Mr. Curtis will probably, but not certainly, be renominated. He puts the administration politicians in a position where a failure to nominate him would be an insult not only to him, but to Kansas. There is a desire to avoid insulting either; but the notion of Mr. Hoover's having a running mate who will be seventy-two when the election is held fills the White House politicians with no special fervor. It might be different if Mr. Curtis were a popular stump speaker, capable of bearing some of the burden of the campaign; at best he is a drab speaker who waves the flag, pounds the Constitution and lauds the party—one who will be a drag on the Republicans and a target for the Democrats from the start.

Some months ago there appeared, under the name of the chief administration journalistic spokesman, a story which bore all the earmarks of having been inspired. This story mentioned Mr. Curtis in the most kindly and affectionate way, but emphasized his advanced age and suggested that his friends would rejoice if he could realize the risk his party took in renominating a man who would be over seventy when Hoover's second term began—if there should be a second term. It was not long after the appearance of this gentle hint that Mr. Curtis conveyed to the White House his desire to run again with Mr. Hoover, along with the information that he would make a formal statement sometime later.

Here in Washington it is felt that Curtis' statement clears the way for ex-Senator Henry Allen, who will probably again obtain the Kansas senatorial nomination. Henry is a dear friend of the "Chief's." He was the authoritative White House spokesman during his brief sojourn in the Senate. His defeat by a Democrat last year disappointed but did not discourage him, for he felt that the set-up was against him and that the local conditions which had made the result possible would not continue. He has made no secret of his purpose to run again. It is said that he would have done so had Mr. Curtis entered the senatorial primaries [illegible]

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

rate, the removal of Charlie from the local field makes the going easier for Henry and I forecast an early announcement from him.

The other development during the past week has to a large extent been kept under cover. It concerns the World Court fight, scheduled to open in the Senate, I understand, soon after the first of the year. Ever since the protocol was submitted by Mr. Hoover, the irreconcilable group in the Senate has contended that it would be beaten. Until recently, however, they have not really believed it. Now they do, and the cause of the change from bluff to conviction is the quiet promises they have received from Senators who voted for the ratification before, and from one or two new Senators who were expected to vote for it this time. Part of this is due to the persistent and constant pressure of the Hearst newspapers and organization, part of it to the desire of one or two senatorial lawyers to display the profundity of their knowledge of international law, and part to the difficulties the League faces in solving the Manchurian question.

The point I am making now, however, is that the confidence of the irreconcilables is no longer merely bluster, but is based on recent accessions to their ranks. There is a private poll in existence showing thirty-five Senators against ratification. Inasmuch as but thirty-three are needed, there seems to be some justification for their feeling. However, no one can tell about these Senators until the roll is called. A great deal depends upon the kind and character of the pressure exerted upon them. If Mr. Hoover is in earnest about the Court, he can, I suppose, get some of the wavering administration members back in line, and if the advocates of the Court in the several states are sufficiently active and aggressive, they may be able to get some others. All I am saying is that the situation of last year, when it seemed that there were votes to spare for ratification, has changed. The chief reason for this is that the most influential force opposing the Court never ceases working on the quiet.

The victory of Snell over Tilson in the Republican caucus was extremely unimportant except to the individuals concerned and a few politicians. There was little to choose between them. Both are hard-boiled, Old Guard, organization Republicans, whose recent liberality about the House rules was born of expediency, not conviction. However, I have a certain feeling of sympathy for Mr. Tilson, who by all the laws of the political game was entitled to hold the honor which had already been given him, but was pushed aside with a ruthlessness that would have hurt a more sensitive man.

Snell, in my opinion, has just as little personal appeal and charm as Tilson. He is not popular with the progressive Republicans, whom he has oppressed in the past, and he has none of Longworth's personal popularity with the regular rank and file. The House Republicans are a discouraged and morose set of men. To my mind there is nothing more ridiculous than a split in a minority, for the only excuse for a minority is unity. There will be no real unity in the Republican minority during this session. The White House, I am informed, was careful to keep hands neutrality and impartiality, with the net result, I may state, that the backers of both Snell and Tilson were pained and resentful.

The victory of a Wet Democrat in the Fifth New Jersey District over a Dry Republican not only gives the Democrats in the House an additional vote, which they sorely need, but it is perhaps the most depressing election news the White House has yet received. Like Governor-elect Harry Moore, Mr. Stewart based his campaign on the repudiation of Hoover's administration. The result was startling. There is no escaping the deduction that New Jersey is lost for the Republican party in 1932; and if New Jersey is lost, so is New York, for only rarely do the two disagree in a national election. Without New York and New Jersey, it is completely impossible for the Republicans to elect a President—or the Democrats either, for that matter.

The Republicans find some hope and comfort, however, in the double belief that the business recovery will be well under way by next fall and that the Democrats will not only dissipate their chances by their incompetency and futility during the session, but that their presidential candidate will not "appeal to the solid and conservative interests of the country." Nevertheless, the real conviction of the clearer political minds in the Republican party was perhaps trenchantly expressed by an Old Guard Senator with whom I talked after the New Jersey result. Said this organization wheelhorse sadly, "It certainly looks as if we were going to take it on the chin next year."

Washington. T. R. B.

Fall and Rise: Theatre Notes

I REMEMBER, once in a box at the Philharmonic when Madame Frieda Hempel sang some piece of *fioritura* from an Italian opera, my right-hand neighbor's comment. She thought, she told me, it had been sung beautifully, but did not like that kind of music. I said, "But it's not that kind of music." I recall that moment now as a commentary on Miss Ethel Barrymore's production of "The School for Scandal."

I can see perfectly the point that theatre people make: when so many trashy occasions get safely past journalistic criticism, why pounce on every attempt to do something worth while or to revive a treasure out of theatrical history? There are various answers to that, but for the nonce we will let it stand as good doctrine. This, therefore, is no assault on the latest revival of Sheridan; on the contrary, the stage can be grateful for the intention and for the chance of seeing a play that many theatregoers might otherwise never have seen at all in all their lives. I am only taking up Miss Barrymore's version of "The School for Scandal" when its New York engagement is already closed, and I am using it only as an illustration of a point.

Everybody, I suppose, has discerned that acting follows drama, that the kind of acting we are to have is determined by the kind of drama that has arrived and is on hand to be acted. With the coming of realistic drama, actors had to unlearn many of their hard-earned technical lessons, to get convincingly down from their classical or sure-fire

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED.

highhorses, and to release themselves into something closer and more habitual in men's daily life. You can imagine Mrs. Siddons, for example, in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray," knocking marble pieces off herself at every turn. You cannot imagine at all Miss Pauline Lord as Molière's Célimène. Our acting nowadays has accustomed itself to the ways of realism and prose actuality. The amount of conscious technique is less, and with many players the technical sense itself has never really been aroused; their attitude is casual, their method is hit-or-miss or is seen as a form of personal expression. It has finally come about, as one of the products of our modern sort of drama and the needs of our theatre, that people are not taught any acting at all. Now that Belasco is dead, there are not even directors who could give a player a lesson, as he could do and did do, on however undistinguished a plane it may often have been. What our actors know and can do derives from practice and experience, from their fitness for the role attempted, from their developed sense of the audience, and so on and so on. We have plenty of good actors, but acting itself as a technical accomplishment and study is in a state of chaos; the stress is on what is special to the actor himself, not on scales and fingering.

When it comes to revivals out of the past, drama on which the style and character of some definite epoch not our own is stamped, how can we expect to manage? If you want to do Shakespeare, for instance, what is there to lead you to expect that you can, by merely going out into the theatres, find young players, at least players young enough to keep us awake, who in the course of four weeks' rehearsal, with a director who himself never had any training in this style of dramatic art, can by mere will and purpose read blank verse? The chances are that they cannot even speak an English that is not merely casual or worse. As for the slant of mind by which Shakespearean drama is even modestly apprehended, you could not promise yourself a dozen instances in the whole general run of our players. As to that evening of "The School for Scandal," the old piece shone through sometimes in spite of the production, which was not noticeably bad so much as it was just nothing at all beyond a strange, dignified blank. No need to stay on the subject, the whole thing was said in a nutshell when the famous screen came away and Miss Barrymore delivered a sincerely grateful sermon of thanks and good resolutions from Lady Teazle, who by that time had subsided into the solemnity of a pre-war problem play and forgotten that the eighteenth century had ever existed. Sir Peter's surprise at seeing his wife emerge from another man's concealment would have been nothing to Sheridan's at seeing these solemn matters thus exposed where he had never dreamed of finding them.

All that may pass, if you like, so long as we remember, for Sheridan's sake and art's sake, that this kind of thing on which you pass judgment is not this kind of thing.

For reasons connected with such a discussion, it is hard for people to understand the accounts of someone's going time after time to see the same play—an old Frenchman, for example, who has seen "The Cid" a score of times and means to see it again. It is impossible to imagine going time and time again to see a play merely because of its story or sentiment or the charms of the leading actor. The capacity for [illegible] goer is the softest or loosest of fans, rest in technical exploration, as we might enjoy hearing Mr. Toscanini and Mr. Stokowski and half a dozen other conductors attack the "Ninth Symphony." How will this scene be interpreted? this line read? this passage spoken? these are the kind of questions that imply repetition and cultivated interest in theatregoing. There are many other virtues and healthy elements in the theatre art, of course, but this exact element, before and behind the footlights, is one of its basic continuities. Many a man in New York will hear the same Beethoven every year again for years. We can think of shall we say Shakespeare in that connection; and then ask ourselves how many people, with how many plays and with how many actors, will sit waiting to see how a passage will be read, what pitch given the attack, what tempo taken, what satisfactory tradition maintained, or what freshness shown. All this is not so much to decry as it is to understand. There may be good reasons for things being as they are in our theatre, good or bad; but it can do no harm knowing how they are. If there is no conscious and studied technique, based on training and tradition, the chances for revival and revisiting are cut down to the limit. How much we lose thereby, how much we gain, is another discussion.

By a curious sort of reversion from Sheridan and Shakespeare we come to Mr. Behrman's case. In "Brief Moment" he has tried to push forward a certain quality that he especially chooses to be present in his playwriting.

What Mr. Behrman finds is a theatre in which at one time, a good many years ago, there was a good deal of the conversation of dramatists like Shakespeare, Otway, Goldsmith, to cite a mere three of them. But such talk is forgotten on our stage, or merely reserved for revivals and ambitious occasions. Our drama has manifested a certain degree of ideas, many clever contrivances, a gift here and there for powerful dramatic images; it boasts good narrative, varied and interesting characters, lively dialogue. But thought, intimate and complex ideas exchanged between human beings, abstraction and generalities, our stage is unaccustomed to. The proof of this, if you need any proof, might be found when we undertake any more or less average Latin play, one of Benavente's for example. Those spreading speeches, those moralizing or philosophic or analyzing discourses, come down on our actors like a pall. They are puzzled as to how such dialogue should be attacked. What cannot be cut from their speeches entirely they get through as best they can. Where a Latin actor would merely stand still, letting this play of his mind appear, you will see most of our actors putting in this and that piece of stage business, inserting apologetic movements for relief, trying to give an air of naturalness or whimsy to these lines that seem to them both unlikely and uncomfortable, and you will see the audience receiving this same dialogue as wordy and undramatic, for the simple reason, first, that the words have not been absorbed by the actors into the acting substance that they are supposed to create, and, second, that the translator or adapter has not been able to give the speeches any sort of reality or likelihood that would carry them across the footlights.

Mr. Behrman, then, comes along and wants to put into

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

say in this our time, and as we find in books, fiction, essays, poetry, and here and there in the modern world's drama; not necessarily profound things, but certain responses, reactions, exchanges, that have their necessity and point. He is confronted with this state of affairs in our theatre; which though it undoubtedly has qualities more robust and dramatic than this of his, yet needs also the extension or possibility of what he tries for. He is not only confronted with this technical habit against which he must struggle, but with the fact also that he belongs to a country where there is practically no conversation and is speaking to an audience most of whom never heard a conversation in their lives. Some of these may have read such matters in books and felt them in their own selves even, but the habit of hearing them spoken between people they are unused to. Almost any analysis or subtlety if expressed in stage conversation alone will seem either undramatic or unlikely to them. In some ways it is possible for a theatre, as it is for a citizen, to reach a good stalwart manhood without having quite grown up. STARK YOUNG.

CORRESPONDENCE

Who Runs the Japanese Government?

SIR: In the current discussions of the Manchurian issues not enough emphasis is placed upon the power and position of the army and navy in Japan. They stand upon an independent footing, and for practical purposes can snap their fingers at the civilian authorities. Like the militarists of all countries, they believe only in force and assume that they can never be mistaken themselves. They know that adventures abroad divert popular attention from grievances at home and they make the most of that philosophy of state. In these circumstances it is never possible for an outsider to tell who is running Japan at a given moment: the civilian government or the army and navy. Hence nothing that appears in the newspapers about "the policy of the Japanese government in Manchuria" is worth very much. Nobody knows what the militarists have up their sleeves. Judging from the doings of their brethren in other countries, it doubtless has some relation to "strategic frontiers," which must be extended to the moon unless stopped by an immovable body.

CHARLES A. BEARD.

New Milford, Conn.

In Defense of Kentucky

SIR: I want to protest against the tendency in the press to speak of the state of Kentucky, in connection with the violence of the owners and their hired men in the Harlan County coal fields, as being necessarily more backward and barbarous than any other part of the American Union. Liberal editorial writers, it seems to me, are always letting themselves be switched off the track by ideas of geography It was the same thing during the Southern textile strike. The terror against striking workers is much more continual and effective in the hands of the coal and iron police in Pennsylvania than in the hands of Sheriff Blair's gun thugs, and certainly the financial banditry that has brought the coal industry into its present state of collapse, where the owners are being driven by the fear of bankruptcy into trying to pay the overhead on their properties through what is virtually forced labor and peonage, no more recognizes state lines than it does national lines. In fact, it could be argued that the faint traces of democratic government (of course this doesn't apply to Negroes) that still exist in many Southern regions are a symptom of this backwardness, a last vestige of a state of mind long swamped by [illegible] through the rest of the country.

coal operators in the last election, and the action of a jury of small business men and farmers in Mt. Sterling in acquitting Bill Burnett in the first of the murder cases growing out of the Evarts war last spring that came up for trial. So far as I know, Bill Burnett's is the first victory in the courts of a workingman labeled as radical since the acquittal of the Wobblies in the huge murder trial in Seattle that followed the Everett shootings in 1913. If this is reaction, let's have more of it.

Of course these may be straws that show the way the wind is not blowing, but there is also a chance that they may be symptoms of a changing point of view. America has admittedly been oversold on prosperity; maybe we've been oversold on political repression, too. There was a time when the appearance of Mrs. Grundy with her toothpicks would have been enough completely to discredit Theodore Dreiser's effort to publicize the misery and violence imposed by the employers in the coal fields. This time, so far as you can make out from the press comments, Mrs. Grundy was a flop and a boomerang. Might it not follow that employer violence has overstepped itself for once in the coal industry (don't forget that the Pennsylvania strike this summer was put down as brutally and much more effectively than the strike in Harlan County), and that perhaps the Harlan cases can be used as a lever to pry open a few more prison gates? After all, if a Kentuckian who happens to be a miner has a right to defend himself against attack by hired thugs of the coal operators, even if they happen to wear deputy sheriff's badges, why in the name of common sense hasn't a lumberjack in Washington state the right to defend his union hall or a textile worker in Gastonia the right to defend a tent colony? The next few weeks, and especially the outcome of the plea for Mooney's pardon, will show, I think, which way the wind is blowing. Of course it's foolhardy optimism to hope, but wouldn't it be a great joke if by one of those sudden right-about-faces that sometimes occur in the national mind, Kentucky found herself one morning in front instead of in the rear?

JOHN DOS PASSOS.

Provincetown, Mass.

Lost—An Open Letter

SIR: In the year 1905 or 1906, I published in some publication "An Open Letter to Lincoln Steffens." I have told the story of this article in "The Brass Check," page 25. I have no copy of this article, as all my papers were burned in the Helicon Hall fire. Neither has Steffens a copy of the article, as he also had a fire loss. I am very anxious to find a copy of this article, as it contained a somewhat remarkable prophecy of the present collapse of capitalist finance. I have had a search made in The Appeal to Reason, Wilshire's Magazine, and The Arena.

I would greatly appreciate the courtesy if you would publish this letter on the chance that some one of your readers may have a flash of memory and be able to give me a hint as to where the article was published.

UPTON SINCLAIR.

Station A, Pasadena, Calif.

Propaganda in Literature

SIR: One point in Mr. Herrick's review of Upton Sinclair's "The Wet Parade," in your issue of October 7, impels me to answer, even though the question of propaganda in fiction is an old story. If Mr. Herrick's side of the case had not been gaining so much ground of late, I should not trouble to put spokes in its wheel. "Professors, critics and esthetes" as a rule deserve all the scorn that visits them, but in this case (though I have not read any of Upton Sinclair's books) I suspect they are right in ignoring his novels as not being "literature."

The underlying question, of which Mr. Herrick apparently is unaware, seems to me to be this: Why does a writer deeply interested in social injustice take to fiction at all? Either he must feel instinctively that there is a weakness in his cause itself—that the case in not really as bad as he wishes us to suppose—or (and this is the real point, since one rarely doubts the sincerity of the

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

must appeal to the great mass of people who live insensitively and obliviously, and who are difficult to shake out of their habitual complacency. It is because fictionized propaganda is—consciously or otherwise—written for this great class of persons who must be stirred if anything is to be accomplished that it is rarely, if ever, good literature. Writing of this sort is useful and altogether admirable for its purpose, but the professor of literature need be concerned with it as historian only, and not as critic. Great literature is never written primarily for the complacent or the impervious. This, and not the notion that literature has nothing to do with life, is the foundation of the case against propaganda in fiction. For a sensitive reader, the court record of a Sacco-Vanzetti case will be more deeply moving than a novel or a play designed to arouse indignation; and for him literature and life, and even his social obligations, may be far better and more organically united in such writing as Mr. Edmund Wilson's suicide sketches in The New Republic last winter. Let us have more of this sort of thing (without, if possible, allowing it to harden into a self-conscious or fashionable *genre*).

ELISABETH SCHNEIDER.

Lakeland, Florida.

What's Wrong with Ideology?

SIR: Judging by his contributions to The New Republic, Edmund Wilson's case is becoming genuinely alarming. Would it not be well for him to lay down his Marcel Proust and "Ulysses," and take up a copy of La Rochefoucauld's "Maxims"?

I have read Mr. Wilson, with a certain devotion, for ten years. Surely that gives me the privilege to wonder if he is ever going to pirouette out of the daffydowndillydom of pure ideology.

Tucson, Ariz. D. POWERS.

An Author's Correction

SIR: Let us try to get our metaphysics as straight as possible. In your notice of my book, "A World of Epitomizations," in your issue of October 21, pp. 279-80, it is inaccurate to say that individuation, interaction, reproduction and segregation are "monads"; they are, as I think, and say on page 4 of the book, monadic characteristics, exhibited by monads at various levels. Also, the use of the word "Epitome," capitalized, is the reviewer's, not mine. Thank you.

GEORGE P. CONGER.

Minneapolis, Minn.

The Gateway to Freedom

SIR: Ernest Jerome Hopkins' article in The New Republic of October 7 on the methods of torture (third degree) employed by the police reminds me of the real terror I felt at the time of my first landing in the United States when I was imprisoned on Ellis Island. It was an instinctive terror, contrary to reason but irresistible none the less; at present I am beginning to understand it. The prison on Ellis Island was guarded and directed by men of the same type as those mentioned in Mr. Hopkins' article.

As soon as I was freed from Ellis Island I resumed my interrupted journey to the University of Minnesota, where I had been appointed to an assistant professorship. There my friends introduced me to another America, but instinctively I had come to realize the character of these beings described by Mr. Hopkins—who in your country are much more powerful than yourselves.

Paris, France. PHELPS MORANE.

A New War Resistance Society

SIR: Your readers may be interested in a new drive for war resistance.

Peace Patriots, an association with offices at 114 East Thirty-first Street, New York City, will oppose all military preparation as inconsistent with the renunciation of war by fifty-nine nations through the Pact of Paris.

Demand will be made for universal total disarmament by the conference at Geneva in February, 1932.

Peace Patriots requests official recognition of exemptive status in the next war for all members of organizations previously pledged to refuse war service. It distributes "2%" buttons symbolizing Einstein's idea that if 2 percent of the people declare that they will not fight, governments will not declare war.

Membership is open to all American citizens who believe that opposition to war is compatible with true patriotism.

New York City. WILLIAM FLOYD, Director.

More About Deflation

SIR: I have just seen Mr. W. T. Davis' letter [The New Republic, November 18] criticizing the argument in my article "Prices Must Come Down" in The New Republic of September 23. I should like to point out a few places in which he has misunderstood my statements, since our only hope of progress in economic theory is to debate the issues and not wander down the by-paths.

I emphasized two main points: first, that what I call "money-in-use" had contracted enormously, more than anything our theory allows for, and second, that the shrinkage of money-in-use was followed in this depression by a markedly *uneven* fall in prices. There is always a ripple movement of prices. Manufactured goods, retail prices and capital prices will each come down more slowly than raw materials. It is the increasing rigidity of prices like rents and mortgages, branded goods, electric-light rates, the greater range between high and low prices in this depression, the *increasing dispersion,* that I want to emphasize. It is of the essence of the argument that this rigidity in some parts of the system increases the price fall in other parts. That was clearly stated in my article. The failure of rents and agricultural machinery to fall *increases* the drop in raw materials. The agriculturists should be the last to object to my argument.

I made no objection to specific measures of inflation, provided they are not politically controlled. I opposed only the inflation panacea. It never seems to occur to anyone that we had inflation in 1927 and 1929. If it worked, what is wrong today? I cannot accept the theory that the malicious owners of capital suddenly began to deflate credit, so that they might have more money, because I cannot accept the premise that they have more money. I don't believe it makes the bond owners a bit happier to own a larger share of the world's income in 1931 than they had in 1929, when the world's income has shrunk so much that their present wealth is less than they had before. I am not impressed by the argument that they are able to buy more with their shrunken incomes than they could in 1929 because I don't believe it is true.

It is time we left behind the diabolical theory of business depressions. If we do, what is left? Some other influence must have started deflation when inflation had everything its own way. What that was cannot be answered here, but the question shows what inflation cannot do. It cannot *correct the evils of the inflation period.* If our crises are made in the period of inflation, inflation alone cannot be the cure.

It is impossible to go back to the 1929 price level except by dangerous political interference. There was something rotten in the state of business—and agriculture—in 1929. Until that is cured, we have no guarantee that money put in the market by the government or the banks will become money-in-use and not money-in-hoarding or money-in-speculation. That is why inflation is a dangerous mirage. That is why I said that we shall have in any event to master the technique of price reductions.

If we can correct the weaknesses in business, business will start upward, money will be brought back into use and we shall have healthy inflation again on an economic foundation. The first step in that direction, I am convinced, is deflation of those prices that have not yet come down enough. Whether the price level is high or low—I repeat—business can go forward, so long as prices are equalized, that is, *in a workable relation to each other.*

Mr. Davis complains because I did not outline a practical plan of cure as well as analyze the theory of industrial depressions. I recognize the obligation to state this thesis in its concrete and practical aspects, but I do not see how it could have been done in five thousand words.

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

Immaculate Contraception

The Case Against Birth Control, by Edward Roberts Moore. New York: The Century Company. 321 pages. $2.50.

SO "THE Catholic Church believes in birth control." Even with the qualifying phrase which completes the sentence—"but by self-control"—the statement is of tremendous importance, particularly if true. It occurs in this latest authoritative Catholic book on birth control, and is not a disconnected statement, belied by the context, but a deliberately worded pronouncement, expressing one of the central themes of the volume.

There have been numerous statements in recent years as to the Catholic position on birth control. These have been characterized largely by vagueness, inconsistency and contradiction. One might hope to find in this book a lucid and unequivocal presentation of *the* Catholic doctrine on the subject, since it represents the findings of the Committee on Population Decline and Related Problems, appointed about two years ago by the National Conference of Catholic Charities, of which the author was chairman, and since it bears the customary stamp of authoritative approval. On this point, however, the best that can be said is that if what this book says is true, then much of what has recently been uttered in the name of Catholic authority must be false.

The book does, indeed, have the merit of an honest title. It admittedly purports to present the negative side of a very important social problem. In other words, it is a piece of propaganda, and of propaganda the author very pertinently observes that it is "of its very nature special pleading, and largely inspired by emotion. It therefore inclines to the presentation of extreme aspects of a situation." It would accordingly be unfair to expect in this book an objective examination of the birth-control problem, with a clear presentation of the arguments on both sides of the question, and a recognition of such weight as they may possess. Certainly we find nothing of the sort.

A large part of the book consists of a restatement of the more commonplace Catholic objections to birth control, with all the half-truths, dogmatic assumptions and distortion of opposed views which usually characterize this material. In the way of actual support of his contention that the use of contraceptives is dangerous or harmful, the author cites a number of very positive statements from a very limited range of sources. He admits that, "The medical profession is divided. There are, however, few doctors of high standing who are willing to make definite statement that contraception is safe and harmless." But how, one may ask, could any scientific man make such an unqualified statement about anything so multifarious and diversified as "contraception" in the aggregate? Of a similar nature is the assertion credited to a certain physician, "There is not a single preventive at all times and surely uninjurious." Once more we ask, is there any medical procedure, even of a designedly therapeutic nature, of which so sweeping a claim could be made?

So this section ends, without having added anything of importance to the knowledge, already widespread, that contraception is basically a medical question, that many of the methods in use are ineffective, troublesome and liable frequently to involve unfortunate consequences; but that, on the other hand, millions of persons are habitually practising contraception without suffering serious results; that, as a result of extended scientific research and practical experi-

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

oped, and that there is a notable swing of medical opinion toward recognition of the necessity of contraception, and toward the responsibility of doctors to put it on the highest level possible.

Dr. Moore's treatment of what he calls "The Population Aspect" presents the same general features. He displays a wide familiarity with most of the recent literature on the subject. After reviewing the facts and arguments presented therein, he arrives at the conclusion, "So after all it appears that we need not worry about overpopulation," in spite of the fact that almost without exception the authors whom he quotes so freely themselves agree that without some limitation of population the earth would, in a few generations, overflow with swarming misery.

The really important parts of this book are those dealing with the moral, social and religious aspects of birth control, because it is upon these that the Catholic Church is supposed to speak with authority and clarity. Unfortunately, Doctor Moore leaves us as much in the dark as ever on these points. There are three main issues in this category: Does the Catholic Church advocate a rapid increase of population? What is the attitude of the Church on birth control by marital continence? What is the "natural law" in the matter, and what is its authority?

On the first two of these points our author is very outspoken, regardless of the fact that his views are diametrically opposed to equally high, or even higher, Catholic authority. Dr. Moore says, "The idea, so surprisingly current, that the Catholic Church requires the raising of as large families as possible, is an utterly mistaken one. The Catholic Church believes in birth control, but by self-control [pages 44-45]." But Father T. J. Gerrard, whose book, "Marriage and Parenthood: The Catholic Ideal," bears the same stamps of approval as Dr. Moore's, sums up a discussion of God's desire for the largest possible number of worshipers with this solemn warning: "To hinder the course of nature, therefore, is to interfere with God's plans. . . . A diminution of the number in the children of the Church is a diminution of the Church's collective faith, and love, and holiness."

The recent papal encylical on this general subject, than which there could be no higher authority, abounds with encouragement to rapid increase. The following statement is typical (here as elsewhere the italics are my own):

> But Christian parents must also understand that they are destined not only to propagate and preserve the human race on earth . . . but . . . to raise up fellow citizens of the saints and members of God's household, *that the worshipers of God and our Savior may daily increase.*

Closely connected with this subject is the question of the Church's attitude toward marital continence. Dr. Moore repeatedly asserts that this practice enjoys full Catholic approval. He says, "The advocate of birth prevention by artificial means describes marital continence as an ascetic ideal, possible to a few, but no practical solution of the problem vital to so many," and then vehemently repudiates this notion. But Father John A. Ryan, who is certainly as authentic and authoritative a spokesman of the Church as Dr. Moore, takes exactly the opposite attitude:

> The Catholic Church does not forbid it [the voluntary limitation of offspring] when it is effected through abstinence from conjugal intercourse, and without undue danger to the maintenance of chastity. However, [illegible] does not positively and generally recom-

mend this sort of restriction; first, because she is not convinced that the lowering of the birth rate is urgently necessary; second, because *she knows that the practice of conjugal abstinence will probably not be readily accepted nor chastely followed by the majority of married couples* [The Survey, March 4, 1916].

And once again, the highest of all Catholic authorities, the Pope himself, ranges himself in direct opposition to Dr. Moore's views. In the encyclical referred to, in which the Pope exhaustively and with great deliberation, promulgates the Catholic doctrine on birth control, there is only one mention of marital continence, a brief, parenthetical admission that it is permitted when both parties consent. Nowhere is there the slightest encouragement to have recourse to it as a desirable solution of any of the problems of population or family life.

As to the rule of natural law in this field, the whole question has been so thoroughly canvassed hitherto, and the impossibility of the non-Catholic mind perceiving any logic or reason in the Church's attitude so completely demonstrated, that there is no point in looking for further enlightenment from Dr. Moore, or of accomplishing any tangible results by analyzing his arguments. But after all, why expect logic? Archbishop Hayes, in his introduction to this volume, recommends us "to examine this propaganda in the clear light of *reason and revelation.*" When reason fails, revelation is always available. One cannot help wondering why the Catholic authorities find it worth while to expend so much time and energy, and cover so many sheets of paper, in attempting to discredit by proof and argument a practice which, in the last analysis, they brand as "inherently wrong," and which they unqualifiedly condemn, as does Dr. Moore, even though good were to come of it. If a thing is irrevocably wrong by nature, no matter what can be said in favor of it, why bother to say anything against it?

And so we are left still hoping that sometime, if for nothing more than to clarify the issue, the Catholic Church will provide the world with a unanimous, consistent, comprehensible statement of its views on the great question of population increase and its control, expressed in terms that the average reader can comprehend, and leaving no ground for uncertainty as to their meaning.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD.

Hamill versus Hoover

The Strange Career of Mr. Hoover under Two Flags, by John Hamill. New York: William Faro, Inc. 366 pages. $3.75.

A YEAR ago there appeared a book entitled "The Great Mistake"; it gave an account of the career of Mr. Hoover in London as a promoter of mining companies, most of which closed by voluntary liquidation. The name of the author was a pseudonym, and the publishers were an *ad hoc* concern, circumstances which permitted The New Republic to forego the unpleasant task of reviewing it. Now, under somewhat more responsible auspices, comes Mr. Hamill's book, which tells the same story. In view of obvious efforts to withhold the book from the public, it becomes a duty to review it.

Mr. Hamill alleges that Mr. Hoover got his start in life in Westralia, whither he was sent as agent for the London firm of Bewick, Moreing and Company. He showed such aptitude in their business that they brought him to London and made him a partner. The business, briefly described by Mr. Hamill, was the discovery of a mine, the issue of stock of which the promoters took a large portion, the booming of the stock by reports of fabulous bodies of ore, the selling out by insiders, and the disappearance of the company by "voluntary liquidation." When a mine proved a bonanza, the reports were adverse until the promoters could buy back their stock at reduced prices. Mr. Hoover specialized in Westralian mines, but his offerings included coal in China, gold in South Africa, Nicaragua and the Klondike, tin in Nigeria and oil in California. Mr. Hamill introduces much corroborative detail drawn from Australian and London newspapers, records of stockholders' meetings, court proceedings and correspondence. He also gives a photostat copy of a published article in which Mr. Hoover defends the extraction of great sums from the investing public in these words: "From an economic point of view this £800,000 of capital in the hands of the insiders is often invested to more productive purpose than if it had remained in the hands of the idiots who parted with it."

During these years, one episode stands out because it became historical. At the time of the Boxer uprising in China, Mr. Hoover had been sent by Bewick-Moreing as mining expert to the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company, directed by a certain Chang Yen-mao. How Mr. Hoover induced Chang to reorganize his company under the British flag in order to obtain the protection of extrality, and then proceeded to freeze out the Chinese owners, was told in the British High Court of Justice in 1905, when Chang sued to compel his English associates to fulfill their agreement. Mr. Justice Joyce gave judgment against Moreing and Hoover, condemning them for "such a flagrant breach of faith as, in my opinion, could not be tolerated by the laws of any country." It should be stated, however, that the verdict was reversed by a higher court on a technicality. Mr. Hamill asserts further that the Chinese Engineering and Mining Company under Mr. Hoover's management accepted the contract for recruiting and shipping Chinese coolies to work in the mines of South Africa—a form of slavery which was licensed by Parliament after the Boer War, to the everlasting infamy of the Tory party and its leaders. The company, according to Mr. Hamill, undertook to ship 200,000 coolies, who were recruited by advertisements which Mr. Lloyd George denounced as fraudulent. They were shipped at the rate of 2,000 in vessels that by regulation were allowed to carry 1,000. On the first voyage fifty-one died out of 1,969. This form of slavery was repudiated in the general election of 1905, and promptly abolished by the Liberals.

Mr. Hoover's career as a humanitarian falls under the same harsh scrutiny. Mr. Hamill insists that in Belgium Mr. Hoover merely acted as purchasing agent for a Belgian commission, and charges that the accounts finally rendered are a mess.

Mr. Hamill and his publisher vouch for the accuracy of all statements in the present volume. It is known that another writer is now preparing a book which will present substantially the same accusations. If they are false (and some of them seem highly questionable) they should be denied. Mr. Hoover has not the same opportunity for self-defense as a private citizen—he could not, without making himself ridiculous, bring a suit for libel against an obscure journalist—but he has friends who could present the facts about his adventures in China and Australia. He owes his position today to these friends who vouched for him as an engineer and a humanitarian. It is their business to defend him from portrayal as a mere promoter and *arriviste*. This would be a public service. It is peculiarly unfortunate at this moment, when confidence is above

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

all needed to bring the world out of its depression, that the President of the United States should be subject to representation or misrepresentation as a man of that familiar get-rich-quick type which played such a large part in bringing on the crisis. With what moral authority could such a man tell his countrymen, "The most potent force in society is its ideals," or, "What we need today is devotion to a better, brighter, broader individualism?" What sympathy could be expected for the miners of West Virginia and Kentucky from a man who sold Chinese into similar slavery? Why should Japan respect protests over Manchuria from a man who took the Kaiping coal mines for his firm and the coaling station of Ching-Wan-Tao for England?

ROBERT MORSS LOVETT.

Alexandrians

Alexandrian Poetry under the First Three Ptolemies, by Auguste Couat. New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons. 638 pages. $6.50.

IN 1882, when M. Couat published this book primarily, as he said, to meet the requirements of learned critics, he expressed in his preface the hope that the book might, at the same time, "do its share in spreading among cultivated readers a knowledge of a period in literary history which is in certain respects analogous to the period in which we are now living." Ten years earlier Nietzsche had made the same comment: "Our whole modern world is entangled in the net of Alexandrian culture." The literary developments of half a century have made those analogies more conspicuous than they were to the philologists of the eighties, and it is fitting that M. Couat's volume should now be given a wider circulation by the medium of this translation from the French.

The translator is that already distinguished literary philanthropist, Dr. James Loeb. His own preface to the present volume is brief and modest, sensible and stimulating. It it apparent that he understands a translator's function. "Translation," he remarks, "is a very stimulating form of mental gymnastics. The work is well done only if the reader can discover no evidence of strained muscles." Dr. Loeb has been not only translator, but also editor, in bringing the volume further up to date by soliciting from Professor Cahen the supplementary chapter concerning relevant material discovered since the publication of Couat's work.

If authors and works are unknown to us, the general characteristics of Alexandrian literature are familiar enough; we willingly concede the period a historical rather than an intrinsic importance. The nature of this importance and its application to our own time are not so evident; we are less conscious how Alexandrian we ourselves are. Themes and styles that seem to us as natural as the air we breathe are so only because we breathe an Alexandrian air. The reader who has little Greek to speak of, and not much flair for critical exegesis, will find the most interesting general information in M. Couat's first and last chapters. He should by no means skip the intervening ones. M. Couat does not urge the analogy; except in his preface, he does not even hint it. What forces upon a reluctant sense an inevitable conclusion is the way in which, for all the differences, details of this resemblance persistently accumulate. The reader will find, amidst exhaustive treatment of Callimachus or Aratus, criticism applied to ancient writers equally pertinent to modern ones, description of a literary taste like our own, of a literature similarly determined; in parable, a synopsis of our generation.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES.

Bread and Socialism

The Soviets Conquer Wheat: The Drama of Collective Farming, by Anna Louise Strong. New York: Henry Holt and Company. 289 pages. $2.50.

THE ATTITUDE of the West toward Bolshevism and all its works has been not merely hostile but disbelieving: the thing is preposterous! Therefore, when the West first heard of the Five Year Plan, the immediate verdict was: A measure of desperation—impossible! And indeed, beyond a certain point the Five Year Plan proved impossible; the masses of industrial workers gathered in factories and cities and construction camps could not obtain bread. Historians of the French Revolution tell us that never was there such energetic ploughing in France as in 1792; but after the Russian Revolution the peasant ploughed no more land than was necessary for his immediate wants, which, however, seemed to have greatly increased. He ate more and better food; his and his children's mortality rate fell off at a startling pace; but he produced little food for the cities and none at all for export: If the Communists are so eager to introduce socialism, let them produce bread themselves! The Bolshevik reply was: If the village does not care for the Revolution, then the Revolution must be carried to the village, and agriculture must be socialized. The conception was bold, and its execution extremely difficult. Twenty-five million peasant households could not be wrenched from age-old ways of life and work without resorting to brute force, and meanwhile the cities and the revolution might succumb to starvation. In a very real sense, the agrarian revolution is the crowning achievement of Soviet policy, its ultimate revolutionary act, for now there is no class left in Russia that, by virtue of its position in the social productive process, might hope to become a capitalist class and bring about a counter-revolution.

Miss Strong was a witness to this last act of the Bolshevik revolution. She watched it in its relentless and brutal course as it passed over the vast land. For an entire year, from the autumn of 1929 through the harvest of 1930, she traveled over the countryside. She "saw the storm of collectivization break on the Volga like a whirlwind." Near Odessa she saw the first of the tractor stations that were to become the mechanism for the new farming. She watched the first mass-collective sowing as it moved north with the spring, from Stalingrad to far Siberia. She saw the harvest in the North Caucasus, and the problems raised by its division. She visited the immense State grain farms, including the Verblud Farm, which trains farm engineers of every capacity, besides ploughing one hundred thousand acres in its first year. In Moscow she learned the plans of the general staff and "observed the confidence with which they turned to farming a continent." It is the fateful drama of that year, "from autumn organization through winter's war and spring sowing to harvest," that is described in "The Soviets Conquer Wheat." And the book is worthy of its vast theme. No more fascinating book has been written on any phase of the great Russian revolution, nor one more informing. It conveys to the reader a full sense of the momentous events which it narrates.

On reading it through, one is bound to ask oneself: Was all this hardship and suffering and violence absolutely necessary? Could it not, at least in part, have been avoided? Mr. Walter Duranty, of The New York Times, has recently characterized the present rulers of the Soviet Union as raw and brutal men. Is then the violent course

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

of the agrarian revolution due to the character of these leaders? Would it have taken a gentler and more orderly course under a government guided and controlled by highly cultivated men like Trotsky and Rakovsky? It will be recalled that Trotsky was the original exponent of the agrarian revolution as well as of the Five Year Plan, but that he had intended them to take a more gradual course, one that would have involved less hardship as well as less violence. Yet Trotsky, too, was in his day of power forced to measures of violence and blood. It is not enough that the leaders be humane and intelligent; their instruments and agents, as well as the resisting mass, must also be possessed of a modicum of these qualities. The rawness and brutality which Mr. Duranty ascribes to the present leaders are in reality all but universal traits of the Russian national character, itself a product of the brutalizing conditions of life in past centuries. The violence which has marked the agrarian revolution seems, therefore, to be an inevitable accompaniment of so profound and far-reaching a transformation condensed in so brief a space of time. Parliamentary debates and party fights, which leave things precisely as they were because both sides occupy a common ground, may be conducted with courtesy and decorum, but thoroughgoing revolutions, which create new ways of work and life and a new order of social relations, cannot, it seems, be made with sweetness and light.

HERMAN SIMPSON.

Vagabond's Return

August, by Knut Hamsun. Translated from the Norwegian by Eugene Gay-Tifft. New York: Coward-McCann. $3.

NO ORCHIDS grow in the harsh soil of Polden town, in the beloved Nordland district of Knut Hamsun's Norway. New ideas, too, seldom strike root in the unreceptive minds of Polden's fisher people. Life there is a straight and narrow road, and it is paved from one end to the other with herring. Mr. Hamsun's latest novel, "August," is a close-up, herring's-eye view of a tiny, cold town and its people; it is a world *in parvo;* and August himself, who blustered through the pages of the author's "Vagabonds," is its central figure.

When August came back to Polden after twenty years of wandering, he hadn't much in his pockets, but his bald head was crammed with fancy notions, which he put to his fellow townsmen. Why should not Polden boast factories and docks, skyscrapers and telephones? Why not modern homes with numbers on them? Why shouldn't it have doorbells and electric lights like all the rest of the world?—Well, why should it? was, in effect, Polden's reply. The only answer to such an attitude is work; so August went to work. He did manage to stir things up considerably. No reformer ever had more blind faith, greater zeal. None ever had more obstacles to overcome. And in the end it all came to nothing. Of August's many projects, the post office alone survived; the "bank" was liquidated, the herring-meal factory abandoned, the newly planted trees uprooted one by one. With his disappearance, August and his ideas immediately became legend, and Polden settled down in its immemorial rut to wait for whispers of herring from up the fjord.

On the person of August, Mr. Hamsum has lavished all his great love of gesture, of the odd and unreasonable action, of the rogue-and-saint admixture, and of lies for their own sake. As a comic, almost burlesque symbol [illegible]

"An Extremely Important Contribution to Human Welfare . . ."
say five great modern scientists.

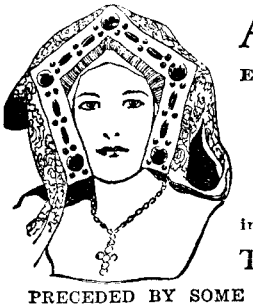
THE INSECT MENACE
By L. O. HOWARD

ONE of the greatest authorities on insect life in the world tells with brilliance and clarity of the warfare man has waged and must continue to wage against the increasing hoards of insects which threaten his food supply, his security, and his continued existence.

"It is a fascinating book to read, larded as it is with tales that seem like fairy stories or detective yarns to those unfamiliar with the insect world. It is a thoughtful book that cannot fail to bring up a picture of what may happen if some day the vigilance of mankind relaxes or is not sufficient and insects get the upper hand. It deserves wide reading.
—Columbus Dispatch.

$3.50
At all bookstores

THE CENTURY CO., 353 Fourth Ave., New York



AVON THEATRE 45th St., West of Broadway. NOW
EVERY NIGHT, INCLUDING SUNDAY
James B. Pond presents for a limited engagement
CORNELIA OTIS SKINNER
in the novelty sensation of the season
The WIVES of HENRY VIII
PRECEDED BY SOME SUPERB CHARACTER SKETCHES
"Few crowded stages are better worth watching than that on which she walks alone."——Richard Lockridge, The Sun.
GO NOW! DON'T MISS HER! Limited Engagement Only. Mat. Thurs. & Sat. at 2:45

THE THEATRE GUILD presents EUGENE O'NEILL'S Trilogy
Mourning Becomes Electra
Composed of 3 plays
Homecoming, The Hundred, The Haunted
All 3 plays are presented on the same day, commencing at 5:30 sharp. Dinner intermission of one hour at 7:00.
No matinee performances
GUILD THEATRE, 52nd Street, West of Broadway

THE THEATRE GUILD presents
REUNION IN VIENNA
A Comedy by Robert E. Sherwood
MARTIN BECK Theatre, 45th St. & 8th Ave. PE—6-6100
Evenings, 8:40. Matinees Thursday and Saturday, 2:40

Beginning Thursday Evening, December 10th
THE GROUP THEATRE presents
1931
By CLAIRE and PAUL SIFTON
Under the auspices of the Theatre Guild
MANSFIELD THEATRE, 47th St. W. of Broadway. Evgs. and

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

the spirit of the age, August does not understand the progress he advocates; feels it is right because "that's the way the world is going"; sees, in short, only the outward manifestations of changing life and never any of their underlying significance. Simply as a man, as a wild, blundering and good-natured vagabond, he is a good character; I do not think he is a memorable one.

The author's familiar style is not enhanced by the attempt of the translator, Mr. Gay-Tifft, to render native colloquialisms into American slang. For example, it is with something of a shock that we hear August exclaim, "Aw, nuts!" (shortly after having stabbed a man, at that); find the adjective "dumb" used to mean stupid, and the dead spoken of as having "kicked the bucket." For, in the creation of August, the author has obviously attempted a grand-scale, picaresque figure; and such jargon as this is little more pleasing coming from him than it would be in the mouths, say, of Uncle Toby or Sancho Panza.

DONALD MINOT YOUNG.

Book Notes

BELLES LETTRES

THE AMERICAN DEMOCRAT, by James Fenimore Cooper. *With an Introduction by H. L. Mencken. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. 184 pages. $2.50.*

This, the fifth volume to be published in Knopf's "Americana Deserta" series, is now reprinted for the first time since 1838, when, owing to the disesteem in which Cooper was then held by many of his countrymen, it could not have had more than a few readers—and it has never had many since. It is hardly a profound piece of social criticism or speculation: Mencken overpraises it in a foolish and characteristic preface. But its interest to both the literary student and the historian is very considerable: the connection between Cooper's fiction and his social prejudices has never yet been made really clear; and, as this reprint makes "The American Democrat" easily available, the publishers are to be congratulated for bringing it out. The short chapter on "The Disadvantages of Aristocracy" tempts the reader to speculate on the question what Cooper would have thought of American "democracy," not under Van Buren, but under Hoover: unfortunately, it can hardly be argued that his real foresight was very great.

BIOGRAPHY

FENIMORE COOPER, CRITIC OF HIS TIMES, by Robert E. Spiller. *New York: Minton, Balch and Company. 337 pages. $3.50.*

The author of this book has adopted the fruitful thesis that Cooper was a social critic as well as, indeed more fundamentally than, he was a romancer: he even goes so far—much too far, certainly—as to call him "the most thoroughly critical mind that early America produced." Such a claim Mr. Spiller's book itself hardly bears out: Cooper's social criticism was always pretty transparently a rationalized statement of Cooper's personal or class prejudices and even of his personal antagonisms. But interested in social and political questions he certainly was; and Mr. Spiller helps us to round out our picture of Cooper by the emphasis he puts on this side of the man. Unfortunately, the book is not a carefully unified and competently ordered presentation of the thesis; it is far too full of the kind of scrappy materials that yearlong devotion to a subject is likely to accumulate in a scholar's files; and the attention, for example, to the exact facts about Cooper's successive residences in Europe is misplaced, uncritical and boring. As regards the thesis itself, Mr. Spiller is better at expounding Cooper's views than at criticizing them: the result is that they are stated far too exclusively in their own terms, and endowed with an objective importance which they certainly do not possess. Perhaps this is the result of Mr. Spiller's

LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

or vulgarized by the kind of equality which Cooper denounced: a writer who can find monotonous equality of social condition in the United States of 1931 may be forgiven for taking Cooper somewhat uncritically at his own valuation.

FICTION

THE DISTANT PRINCESS, by A. t' Serstevens. *Translated from the French by Lawrence Riesner. New York: Farrar and Rinehart. $2.*

In this glamorous tale of political intrigue and love, history and fiction are skillfully blended. T' Serstevens offers us a new explanation for the tragic death of Rudolph of Austria and his mistress and for the assassination, twenty-five years later, of Franz Ferdinand. The story, which is laid in the most exotic of settings, centers round Rudolph's beautiful and mysterious daughter and is dominated by two themes, revenge and love.

Contributors

MICHAEL FARBMAN is editor of the yearbook "Europa" and author of "Piatiletka: The Story of the Five Year Plan," which was issued last spring in The New Republic Dollar Series. He is at present in Germany.

FRANK R. KENT, who has been connected with The Baltimore Sun in various editorial and executive capacities since 1898, is the author of several books on politics and kindred subjects, the most recent being "Political Behavior," which was published in 1928.

RENWICK C. KENNEDY, a native of South Carolina and a graduate of its state college, is at present living in Camden, Alabama.

WALTER WILSON, also a native of the South, who has spent much time investigating the economic and social condition of both Negro and white workers there, is writing a book on forced labor in the United States and her colonies.

HENRY B. FULLER, who travels through the Southeastern states for a publishing house, became interested in civil liberties in the South after he had been flung into a Memphis jail under the suspicion of being a Communist.

HENRY PRATT FAIRCHILD, head of the Department of Sociology at New York University, was instrumental in organizing the Population Association of America, of which he was elected president. Last summer he attended conferences on population in London and Rome.

ROLFE HUMPHRIES, poet, critic and former editor of Measure, is the author of a book of verse, "Europa."

HERMAN SIMPSON, once editor of The New York Call and The New Review, has contributed extensively to The Bookman, The Independent and The New Freeman.

DONALD MINOT YOUNG, now free-lancing in New York City, has worked as a newspaper reporter and as a sailor on merchant ships plying between this country and South America. He is the son of Art Young, the cartoonist.

A SYNDICATE
of carefully selected men and women

Is being formed for the production of exceptional Cultural and Travel Talking Pictures of high market value. Our completed scenarios have received enthusiastic endorsement by leading educational authorities. We have studio and distribution facilities both in this country and abroad. We are ready to start production. Additional capital required, $175,000.—Minimum subscription, $5,000. Terms decidedly attractive.—Active participation may be offered to qualified subscribers. Additional information will be supplied to those giving satisfactory bank references and stating their business connections. Write Box 643, The New Republic.

A Clearing House of Opinion THE GROUP Meets at Auditorium 150 West 85th St.
Tuesday, December 15th at 8:30 P. M.
Theodore DREISER—Lewis MUMFORD—Alfred KREYMBORG
will speak on:
"THE WRITER LOOKS ON AN INDUSTRIAL TRAGEDY"
Subscription Members 50c Non-Members 75c
(Net receipts for benefit of Nat. Comm. for Defense of Political Prisoners)